INSIDE SOCCER

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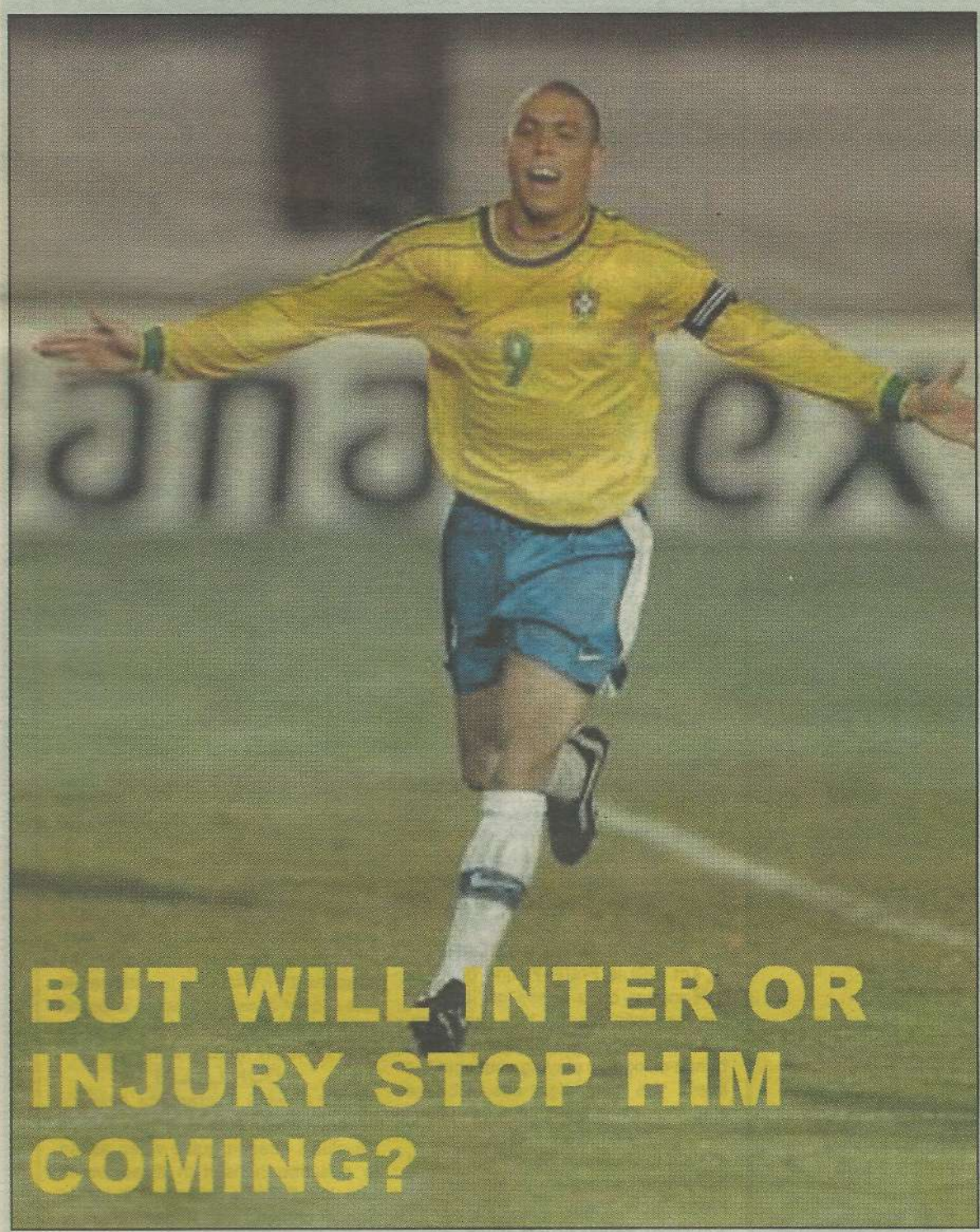
RONALDO SAYS 'I WANT TO PLAY THE SOCCEROOS'



In what would be a massive boost for a tour that has struggled against supporter cynicism, Brazilian superstar Ronaldo has been quoted as saying he wants to come to Australia for the two-match series against the Socceroos next month.

On the CBF's (Brazilian Federation) official Internet site, Ronaldo said he preferred the Australian contest, feeling that two games would be more productive and give him more training time to get fit, rather than one friendly in Spain with no preparation at all.

Additionally, Ronaldo, in an interview with an Italian newspaper on Friday October 15, did say he thought the Australian tour was a good option.

The potential sticking point will be Inter Milan, the club with a massive financial investment in Ronaldo. Can they, in the next day or two, exert enough pressure on the CBF, and Ronaldo, to have the superstar only play in the Spanish game, a match that involves a one-hour flight, as opposed to the long journey to Australia? Will they say he needs to rest?

Ronaldo did however play last weekend, ironically earning a red card in the Serie A.

The Brazilian Technical Committee will officially announce the two Brazil squads this Thursday in the Hotel Meridien in southern Rio de Janeiro.

The Socceroo/Brazil games occur during the Euro 2000 play-off qualifiers, hence the availability of many Australian stars.

In an encouraging move for the tour, Wanderley Luxemburgo will take the helm of the Brazil squad in Australia while Candinho will be in command against Spain in the friendly played the day before the first Australian game, played in Sydney on November 14.

The CBF site also mentions that Alex (Palmeiras), Felipe (Vasco), Roni (Fulminense) - if he is recovers from his current injury, and Ronaldinho (Gremio) may join Ronaldo here in Australia.

While Brazil would have no trouble fielding two strong national teams, the likelihood is that the Brazil side in Australia will be predominantly the Olympic team for Sydney 2000, with the three over-age players they are considering using.

Given Brazil has never won the Olympics - and it is something they are desperate to address - it makes sense that Ronaldo plays with a team he is now more than likely going to be part of at the Olympics in Australia next year.

Together with the Australian superstars Kewell, Viduka, Bosnich and Okon, and the fact these are the first games for new Socceroo coach Frank Farina, ticket sales should exceed this year's previous two overseas tours should Ronaldo get the go-ahead.

Currently approximately 20, 000 tickets for the two games have been sold.

Socceroo coach Frank Farina said he was ready: "It really doesn't matter who Brazil bring out, they'll be a competitive and strong side.

"They have such depth. I'm sure everyone would like to see stars such as Ronaldo and I'm very hopeful he will be here.

"Regardless of who we're facing we'll be playing to win."

PLUS: EVERY NSL GAME COVERED IN-DEPTH, LEE STERREY, YOUTH STARS, MATILDAS, GREG BLAKE

INSIDE SOCCER: YOUR QUALITY WEEKLY DEVOTED TO AUSTRALIAN SOCCER

"Hendo"

Inside Soccer is proud to present a weekly column from one of our best keepers, and a real NSL personality, Spirit custodian Paul 'Hendo' Henderson ...

This Friday night is a very important night for Northern Spirit as we look towards the clash with Sydney Olympic at North Sydney Oval.

Obviously we need the points to stay in touch with the leaders and the top six but it is imperative we put up a good showing for our fans.

Our performance against Newcastle Breakers was not good enough. We know that, we have talked about it and we are determined to show our faithful fans that we do have the same Spirit showed by our loyal spectators.

I for one want to make sure the fans get what they deserve as they have certainly taken to me since I made me debut, ironically against Sydney Olympic last year at North Sydney Oval.

We have attracted the best group of supporters in this country and we need to show them that we can display guts and determination as well as some skill.

Personally, I don't think we need to lift our game by much to see the results go our way. After looking at the tape of the game we should still have won the game against Newcastle, even though we didn't put in 100 per cent.

Luckily for us though we didn't win because it made us have a long, hard look at ourselves and the results will start to mirror our increased effort.

Hopefully, for our fans, that continues when we take on Sydney Olympic at North Sydney Oval on Friday night.

The match kicks off at 7.30pm and should be a cracker.

On the eve of our match against Sydney Olympic it is a great time to remember that first Northern Spirit match against Olympic at North Sydney Oval on October 9, last year.

It is a night I will never forget for a few reasons.

Firstly, it was my National League debut and whether that is in front of 19,000 people at home of a small crowd away, your debut is always something every player cherishes.

I was lucky that my debut was a big occasion. Unfortunately we were on the wrong end of the scoreline.

Secondly, I will never forget the look on people's faces as we walked around the ground and thanked the people for supporting the Northern Spirit Football Club.

It is something I believe is important and, along with the rest of the side, have continued to do it. The fans are, and always will be, the most important part of a Football Club, which is why we will not let them down on Friday night!

readers' forum

Just a short note to express my feelings on the Breakers vs Football Kingz. The Kingz were, I thought, pretty awesome, considering they've only been together for such a short period of time, the cohesion and skill they displayed was excellent and does not bode well for any other team in the competition.

Unfortunately for the Breakers I don't really think it was a case of playing poorly I believe they were outplayed by a far more professional team on the day.

Off the park though the Breakers must be doing things right due to the fact that they have had two of the biggest crowds at home since the Breakers introduction to the league.

My prediction though for this year is the Kingz to make the top six and from there, who knows.

The Guru (E-mail)

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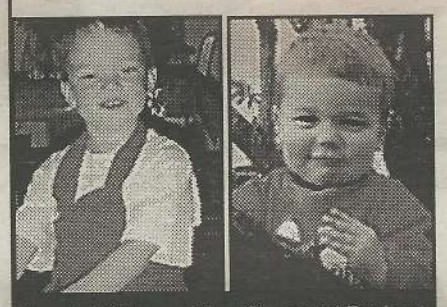
S-NEWS

INSIDE SOCCER'S AUSTRALIAN NEWS AND GOSS

MEET THE OLYROOS

Pictured below are the Olyroos. Yes the Olyroos. Statistician on Australian Soccer, Andrew Howe, has two little tackers called Oliver and Reuben, otherwise known as 'Oly' and 'Roo'. He swears it's just a coincidence (we believe you Andrew!) but looking at the ages of the little champs, looks like they were born just after the 1992 Olympics, arguabley the Olyroos', and Australia's, best ever side. Hmmmmm. Reminds us of the Ripping Yarns episode (this is the last week we refer to it!) when Gordon Ottershaw called his son Barnstoneworth, after his favourite team Barnstoneworth Utd. Good onya Andrew, and keep up the good work Oly and Roo.



From left: Oly and Roo (Oliver and Reuben)

DEANO'S 50

The game against Knights on the weekend was keeper Dean Anastiasidis' game 50 for the Carlton.

BREAKERS ON CREST OF A WAVE

Pardon the cliched metaphor but it's true. Not only are they averaging over 6,000 for home games, but they are now on the net with a handy little site at www.breakers.com.au. And at their half-time promotional game against the Kingz, the 'Media' was up against the 'Rowdies', who featured players such as Simon 'Bad Boy' Babbage, Jim 'Fat Cat' Catlin and Graham 'Bruiser' Gallagher. And surprise surprise, the Rowdies won, proving they are not just armchair critics. Furthemore, Lee Sterrey, not content with being a supercoach also competed in the celebrity drivers' race at the Newcastle Harness Racing Club's ten year celebration. Go the Breakers.

SOCCEROO REPUBLICANS

Not only is Frank Farina going to appear on a series of 'faces of the Republic' for the Yes campaign, but Alex Tobin can be seen with a bunch of kiddies playing soccer in the latest Yes campaign ads. Go the Republic.

FAT BOY FAT!

Said to a certain South Melbourne player when they played the Kingz: 'How many Big Macs have you been eating in the off-season?' Seems one of Ange's boys is not in the fittest of conditions according to at least one King.

GET THE DATES RIGHT

From the weekly soccer paper that recently brought you the Soccer Australia Carpet Tiles Crisis comes the news that they got the dates wrong for the Brazil tour. The dates, as we all know, are Sydney Sunday 14 November, and Melbourne Wed 17 November. Simple. By the way, ticket prices vary slightly between the two cities. Call Ticketek on 9266 4800 to check.

STRIKERS HIT BUM NOTE

What is it with Brisbane Strikers? They are on top of the league yet for a second home game in a row the pre-match entertainment has been, to quote our reporter Cameron Atfield, 'truly embarrassing'. Can anyone tell us about this alleged pre-match entertainment? And how come the game was played a day after the Rugby League test at Suncorp? Surely this was the time to take the Strikers north or even to the Gold Coast to spread the soccer message.

CHILEANS HEAT UP IN NZ

Courtesy of our many 'Kiwi Konnections' (thanks Grant Stantiall) below are the Kingz' new Chilean players David Moya and Aaron Silva. The pair told the *Sunday News* that Silva keeps his watch on Chilean time, and relies on Moya to know when it's time for training! Also Silva wants to learn how to surf while Moya wants to "take a quiet cruise around the bay with a couple of beautiful New Zealand ladies." Kiwi ladies, what are you waiting for?? They hardly speak any English by the way and communicate with teammates mostly through hand signals.

David Moya (left) and Aaron Silva of the Kingz. Viva Chile! With thanks to the Sunday News.

RUDDY AWFUL

Still on Kiwis and Derek Rudd, the ref who was a late replacement for referee Dade for the Power v Cosmos battle, did not make too many friends. Basically he was not up to standard because he seemed unable to keep up with the game (he needs to get a personal trainer) and some decisions were, er, 'bewildering' to say the least. Of course the coaches aren't allowed to criticize the refs, so let's just say when a coach says he's disappointed we all know what he really means, don't we.

OOH LA LA!

This is what Parramatta Power's ace striker Joel Griffiths said in his club's season guide when asked to describe himself in three words See Joel Griffiths next week in Inside Soccer chatting with Roger Sleeman. Other Power players, like Joe Vrkic, responded to the question by saying: 'Tall, dark and handsome.' Meanwhile in the same guide strongman Richard Plesa claims his favourite TV show is *The Bold and Beautiful!* And on that note the sands of time have once again beaten us.

LEE STERREY: PUTTING BACK THE RESPECT

Newcastle Breakers coach Lee Sterrey: "We play smart with what we have."

By Greg Blake

Lee Sterrey loves his footy. He'll chew your ear off on the subject. He also knows his footy, and to ice the trifecta he's proving as much with the second-hottest team in the NSL during the calendar year of 1999.

That's a fact folks.

The unfashionable, cash-strapped, slumbering, blue-collar Newcastle Breakers are indeed one of the best performed clubs going around as we speak.

Since round 15 last season only Perth Glory boasts a better win/loss record than the once lamentable Breakers.

And were it not for the tardy start to the 1998/99, when Newcastle lost five on the trot early season, those much-maligned Breakers might have been-gulp! - play-off material last May.

Following the club's unbeaten three game start to 1999/2000 - a club NSL best - Sterrey's team is suggesting that they haven't finished riding the wave just yet.

"I've got the best team of fighters in the league," Sterrey says guardedly.

"We just play smart with what we have."

And the reality is that he has very little.

Which is what makes the Sterrey-Breakers marriage such an extraordinary story.

Despite a stellar career path as youth coach at both Sydney United and Marconi - for example, do names such as Babic, Bilokapic, Vrkic, Cunico, Care and Farah ring a bell? - Sterrey was destined to wait in coaching queues behind the Farinas, Arnolds, Krncevics and Kosminas seemingly forever.

That's until the less-than-plumb appointment at perennially ordinary Newcastle was available.

The four-club, NSL 107gamer got the nod.

Despite no Zane, no Halpin and no budget (seriously!), Sterrey and sidekick David Lowe drove the Breakers to a club best-ever eighth last season and this time around the Breakers are aiming a little higher.

At 7-6-2 in their last fifteen outings (prior to last weekend) results suggest Newcastle might be about to go deeper unto a season than the club has done before.

But leaping the credibility gap is another hurdle altogether. Sterrey is furious that at least one Sydney daily showed his side no respect at all following the Breakers' stirring third round triumph at Northern Spirit.

"The whole article concentrated on what Graham Arnold had said about his team," says Sterrey.

"It was all about slagging Northern Spirit players for the defeat and we got no credit at all for what we'd done.

"It said 'not to detract from Newcastle but' and then proceeded not to write another word about us."

That press clipping alone, with several others written about Newcastle in the past 12 months, will go up on Sterrey's office wall.

He's not beyond using the classic psychological pin-prick on his charges of 'us against the world.'

"I'm happy with that," he explains.

"Everything like that goes up on the wall.

"I think we deserve a little more respect; I think we've earned it.

"Last season with two games to go we were a real chance (of playing in the finals) and I rang one bloke in the media and asked him if I gave him some time and information whether he could give us some publicity.

> **" ... it sits well with me that we are still treated as underdogs and in some ways I can understand why."**
>
> **Lee Sterrey**

"Not a word.

"Even you Blakey. Not one Breakers player mentioned when you rated the top twenty-five pre-season transfers.

"But it sits well with me that we are still treated as underdogs and in some ways I can understand why.

"The first thing I said to the players when I joined the club was that it's no use blaming the previous coach or anyone else for where they were.

"It was up to them and, to their credit, I've got a group of blokes who are now rolling up their sleeves and working when need be."

Sterrey recalls the number of times my C7 colleague Michael Cockerill during match broadcasts used to repeatedly lament how 'Newcastle have shot themselves in the foot ... again.'

"I had to teach these blokes how to win a game of football," he says.

"It's like five-set tennis, and one bloke might be up 6-0, 6-2 but the other guy claws his way back, wins a third-set tie-breaker and then goes on to take the last two sets.

"The flow of the game can change so quickly and it took some time to get the message through."

The message is obviously hitting the mark.

After losing by the odd goal five times in the first nine rounds last year, the Breakers hit back with six come-from-behind results later in the season, including that very personal last round triumph away against John Kosmina's Brisbane Strikers.

And they haven't lost two in succession since last December.

That form has continued into the new season and with a schedule into December which takes in 'winnable' matches versus Gippsland, Knights and Canberra (all on the road), and Marconi and Adelaide Force at home, Newcastle has a terrific chance to build a springboard into the business end of the season.

"I would hope that we could take that next step (into the top six)," he says.

"Last year with three games to go it was unknown territory to us and hopefully we might have learned something from that.

"But I've said all along that the next seven weeks is the kindest part of the draw for us so we do have to try and the make the most of it.

"When I got the (revised) draw and saw that we'd got Adelaide Force and South Melbourne four times ... I mean that's bloody unbelievable.

"South Melbourne are champions and come round 14 - when we're due to play them - Zoran and his team will be right back up there.

"We've got a long way to go yet and look, even if we were to fall away again and finish back-to-back eighth, at least I think then we would be respected in the league again."

WORLD CHAMPION VIDEO BY ROD HAY

By Aidan Ormond

Successful Australian film makers with a penchant for, and background in, soccer are few and far between.

The fact that one can not only produce programs on soccer, but be awarded the highest honour in the field on a world stage is remarkable.

Rod Hay is the writer, producer and director of the video *Champions of the World*, exploring quite beautifully the roots and passion of the World Game in Latin America.

This video, which has been screened on SBS and took three years to make, has won the premier award at Sportel, in Monaco, a gold medal at the New TV and Broadcasting Festival and the best sports journalist award in Spain.

This is the equivalent of winning an Academy award.

Hay, who makes video clips, documentaries, commercials and feature films, is a former player.

He did an apprenticeship at West Ham before playing in South Africa. He arrived in Australia in 1970.

"With my passion for the game I have been fortunate to be able to work my film making schedule around the football calendar," said Hay.

FIFA, was so impressed by with the history and social impact of *Champions of the World*, which has been broadcast in over sixty countries, it plans to screen the series in their Football museum in Zurich.

In next week's interview Hay talks about the highs and lows of making football videos while being based in Australia.

Continued next page

The roots and passion of Latin American Football

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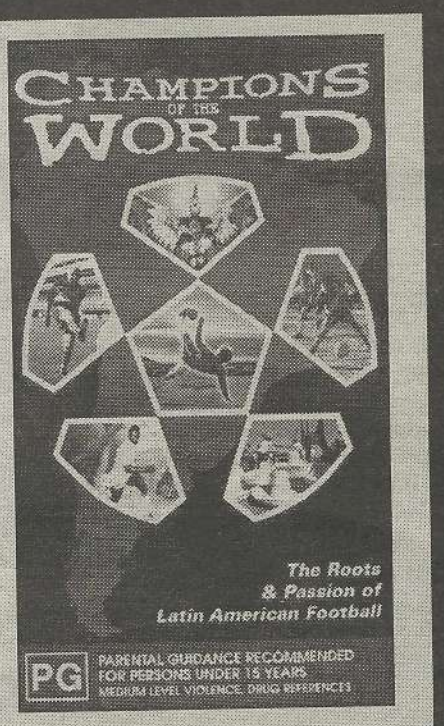


ROADSHOW ENTERTAINMENT

Continued from previous page

Rod Hay takes up the story of Latin Football ... There are two certainties in life: death and taxes. The rest we try to get by the best we can. In Latin America, there is an added guarantee - that football will dominate almost every home.

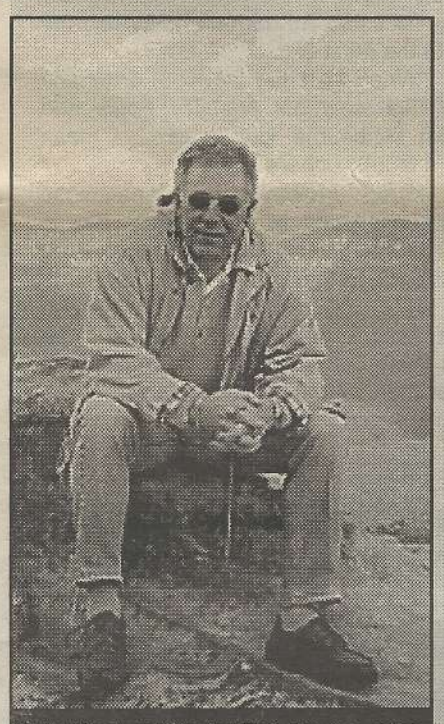
In Uruguay - host and winner of the first World Cup in 1930 - each child is born with two heavy expectations: one that it is a boy, and two it can kick a football. While this might seem unreasonable, one has to realise that Uruguay is a country sandwiched between two giants, both in population and in the history of the game - Brazil and Argentina.

Colombia's 12th man, their colourful number one fan El Cole, showing his support in his own inimitable way.

As a result it must play David against Goliath every time. The 1966 Uruguayan World Cup Coach, Ondino Viera, summed up their position quite simply, 'whilst other countries have their history, Uruguay has its football.'

With a population of just over 3 million, the prospect of matching, let alone beating, their daunting neighbours, is somewhat fanciful. But that is exactly what they have done.

Not once, but many times, at all levels. Whilst we may refer to it as having inordinate self belief, Uruguayans have a more traditional answer - the 'charrua' spirit.



Writer/Producer/Director Rod Hay in a reflective mood in Colombia during the shoot for the Champions of the World video.

During the early colonial days, the conflict between Spanish immigrant and indigenous Indian was bloody and ruthless.

Uruguay offered an olive branch but the charrua was only interested in preserving his sovereignty. Too proud to compromise, it cost him his life. But his strength of character lived on. The Uruguayans recognised the pride and bravery of the churrua and adopted the trait themselves to great effect.

It became a symbol of inspiration and resilience on the football field. None more so than in Uruguay's courageous victory over Brazil in 1950 to win the World Cup for the second time, when Brazil had all but written their name on the trophy as overwhelming favourites.

It was this 'against the odds' attitude that is instilled in most of Latin America in its competitiveness against Europe.

It was also the desire to show the 'master' that the 'pupil' had not only learnt the game, but had surpassed him with something unique - the jogo bonito or beautiful football. To win is one thing, but to win in style is far more satisfying.

Whilst the politics of football have often detrimentally effected the manner in which the game is played, there are many occasions when the South American style has been memorable and untouchable. Throughout the 1920s, Uruguay's famous 'Los Invincibles' and Argentina, produced a brand of open and exciting football known as the Rio Platense, which few could equal. As the racial imbalance in Brazil levelled out during the 1930s, so their multi racial football began to come to the fore.

By the late 1950s, Brazil had taken the game to new heights with a team overflowing with stars, none more prominent than the Black Pearl himself, Edison Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pele, and the 'little bird', Garrincha.

By 1970, through television, the World would witness for the first time together, arguably the best team ever, as Brazil demolished Italy, 4-1.

They played a brand of football that may never be equalled, and cemented Brazil as the world's sentimental favourite, who would set the benchmark for not only beautiful football, but the passion for the game as displayed through their fans and musical accompaniment.

The arrival of Maradonna in the 1980s would elevate Argentina into the ranks of multiple World Champions, although not quite with the respect shown to Brazil. Coupled with neighbours, Uruguay and Brazil, they have collectively won an unprecedented eight World titles and if one accepts Uruguay's Olympic titles in 1924 and 1928, which were World titles in themselves, the total is ten.

Next week Rod Hay, speaking with Aidan Ormond, recalls some of the great moments from the making of Champions of the World video, and his perspective on being a film maker based in Australia.

GREG BLAKE

C7 sport

C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR

The Socceroo potential of Sydney Olympic's Pablo Cardozo could be heatedly debated by experts for hours, but one thing beyond any debate is whether his club coach, Branko Culina, should or should not attempt the potentially legendary Pitt Street streak.

Culina has threatened to run naked down the said thoroughfare 'if Cardozo is not the best striker in Australia'.

As an attention-gaining exercise for soccer it would probably rank every bit as highly as turning Olympic into contenders again.

I'd be stunned if Branko's flailing genitals couldn't make the 6pm news bulletins and I, for one, vote that Culina be made to keep his promise should it be proven conclusively that Cardozo is, in fact, not the best striker in Australia.

Olympic will be hoping that Cardozo's hat-trick in the 4-0 romp at Wollongong in round three is the harbinger of another of Pablo's hot streaks.

Cardozo had scored 13 times in as many starts for the Adelaide Sharks in 1997/98 before heading overseas mid-season and after linking up with Olympic last term he scored another 16 goals in the opening 17 league games for a total of 29 goals in just 31 NSL starts.

An ever present for Olympic last year and league top scorer after his whirlwind start, Cardozo scored just one more goal in the final 11 rounds of 98/99.

He had not got off the mark in the opening two weeks of this season either before breaking the drought in spectacular style at Brandon Park.

To the end of round three Cardozo's NSL career figures were 64 goals in 181 games (at .354 per game), behind the current career averages of the likes of Damian Mori, David Seal, Ivan Kelic, Mile Sterjovski, Francis Awaritefe and Bobby Despotovski.

Get your dacks off, Branko.

Even with his pants on Culina deserves some credit for getting always ailing Olympic apparently back into contention.

There wasn't one pre-season smarty who wanted to know about Olympic, nor would any tipsters even have had a look at John Kosmina's Brisbane Strikers, who posted a perfect 3-0-0 start to the 1999/2000 campaign.

Five of last year's eventual top six were already in place by this time last year but this season the smokies are coming from everywhere, with Sydney United, Newcastle and even annually wretched Canberra Cosmos, staking early-season claims.

Soccer Australia big knobs will be rubbing themselves with glee.

Potentially good news with Northern Spirit keen to take some home games this season to Grahame Park, on the NSW central coast.

Just to keep pace with the other footy codes the NSL has to encourage an expansion policy whenever possible, and Spirit's initiative is to be thoroughly commended.

With our code apparently ranked number one in the area what better way to further the cause than by utilising the delightful brand new 20,000 all-seater stadium, now sadly without the tenancy of Rugby League's ill-fated Bears.

Newcastle boss Lee Sterrey might be happy if the media underrates his charges, but he doesn't mind giving wraps to his virtual no-name outfit.

"No-one works harder than Mark Wilson," says Sterey.

"As a central defender I rate Shane Pryce alongside any players in the country.

"Young Greg Owens can be anything."

And the list goes on.

I'm stunned that Sterrey didn't throw down the gauntlet to national boss Frank Farina over Andy Roberts being overlooked for the national squad.

Something along the lines of: "I'll saunter naked through Birmingham Gardens if Roberts isn't the best policeman in the country."

It's not a shock that the knives are apparently out (yet again) for Adelaide Force's three-time champion coach Zoran Matic.

They always are at this time of year, and while Johnny Perin and John Nyskohous have both taken bullets fired from within the club despite getting Adelaide to the play-offs in recent times, surely Zoran will survive.

After all, who really needs to be reminded that Zoran's team ALWAYS amble through early rounds of mediocrity and ALWAYS make the finals.

Matic's only failure - if you call it that - in the past decade was with the lamentable Collingwood and 20,000 volts couldn't have revived them.

It appears that the Force are already reacting to their mediocre start, with young goalkeeper Anthony Breadon and pre-season recruits from the Sharks Corey Artone and Danny Vidakovic cut from the club's list.

It's sad to note that the NSL retirement of Adelaide Force legend and Socceroo Milan Ivanovic.

It's pretty simple, we will miss a superb talent on-field and a genuinely terrific bloke off the paddock.

Great work, big man.

Tough break for highly-rated and well-remunerated Carlton UK recruit Stuart Slater.

The bubbly midfielder, signed pre-season from Watford, broke down at training with a knee injury before the club's rousing win at Marconi and initially it was thought that he could be missing from action for anything between six weeks and the remainder of the season .

A scan last week revealed ligament damage - later tests later in the week proved to be better news when it showed that Slater would not require a full reconstruction.

Terrific initiative by the Melbourne Knights to actively utilise its Glasgow Celtic/Mark Viduka connection by getting into the ear of Melbourne's Celtic Supporters Club and following up with some free passes to Knights Stadium.

Unfortunately for the hardy twenty or so green and white hooped-clad footy fans who turned up for the Knights' season home opener there was very little to cheer about as the home side was flogged 3-0 by visiting Perth Glory.

Knights officials were still happy with the turnout and are apparently even considering wearing their current 'away' strip of green and white hoops during a couple of home games.

GLENN SPROD: the quiet achiever

By Aidan Ormond

With the closure of BHP and their basketball side it's been a tough few months in Newcastle. However there are plenty of quiet achievers in soccer these days. One of these is Newcastle Breakers defender Glenn Sprod.

Few realize that Sprod spent two years as an apprentice at English club Exeter City, was then offered professional terms with the club but his fledgling UK career was scuppered by work permit bureaucracy (he has an Australian passport.)

Who knows where he would be playing now if he had gone on to play professionally for the now high-flying English third division club? (Another Aussie from Newcastle, Richard Johnson, formerly of Newcastle Australs is now, at 25, playing English Premier League with Watford.)

Glenn Sprod: "we're not a team of stars, but a team of hard workers."

However Sprod couldn't complain about the quality of coach at Exeter; first with ex-England and Leeds stalwart Terry Cooper then Alan Ball, the English legend of the 1966 World Cup.

That was 1990-1992, a time he says, "he wouldn't change for anything."

He had left school in Year 11 for a shot at professional football.

"Originally I was over there for six weeks trialling with various clubs - came back and thought nothing more of it until six months later when I got the call from Exeter City," he explained prior to the Kingz game last Friday night.

Upon his return the unassuming Sprod continued his run of working with quality managers - Parramatta Eagles and coach Rale Rasic was his next stop for two seasons.

"It was a good experience (at the Eagles) ... a quality side and it gave me that extra bit of experience."

Since then the NSW representative has called Newcastle his home. And Newcastle these days is a much different place to what it was when he first arrived.

"With that little bit of success we had last year the fans are now expecting that bit more of us. They come to the games actually thinking we will win."

Much of the latent success of the club is due to coach Lee Sterrey, a fact acknowledged by Sprod.

"He is so approachable. This sort of attitude is passed down through the team plus he has instilled an attitude, professionalism and organization into our side. We are not a team of stars but a team of hard-workers."

Sprod heaped praise on his fellow defenders as well, using the term "quiet achiever" a number of times.

"Shane Pryce (club captain) is quality, cool under pressure, good distribution and a good bloke. Mark Wilson has been playing out of his skin this year, another quiet achiever while Andy Roberts and Todd McManus are very very good athletes.

"And what can you say about Bobby Catlin? He just gets better with age (his performance against the Spirit and the Kingz further proof.)

As for himself, he feels it's up to others to give him the accolades not him (a number of Newcastle fans contacted IS to insist on a Glenn Sprod interview, so impressed have they been with his performances this season.)

"I guess it's good the fans are noticing me," he said. "You don't often find out how they are feeling."

And there will be plenty of accolades in the Hunter if Newcastle can reach the ambition Sprodd sets out.

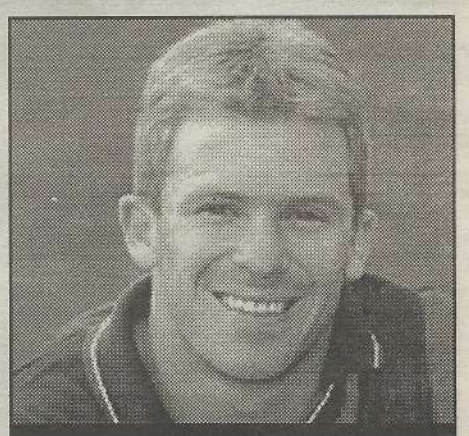
"We have to make the top six. That's the bottom line. If we don't we would not have achieved our goal in my opinion."

> **"We have to make the top six. That's the bottom line. If we don't we would not have achieved our goal in my opinion."**
>
> **Glenn Sprod**

The 25-year-old is however realistic about his own future.

"At my age a European contract is probably out of the question. Of course I want to play for my country but with the amount of overseas Aussies, that is very difficult. Perhaps Asia at some point?"

Another former Breakers defender, Socceroo Darren Stewart, has enjoyed a long and fruitful career in Asia, first with Johor in Malaysia and now in Singapore where he is up for a player of the year award ("highly respected" assessed former S-leaguer and current Wollongong man Stuart Young of Stewart.)



Glenn Sprod: the quiet achiever.

In this day and age of well-paid NSL players from some clubs (Spirit, Marconi, Glory) the attitude of players like Sprod is endearing.

And given the small budget the club had traditionally worked on (this has now only recently changed to a certain degree with the club's new owner David Hall) this is even more commendable.

"When I finish my career I would like to move into coaching, to put back into the game, a game that has been so good to me. I've been playing since I was four and I think that would be a good thing to do."

While some NSL players drive around in fancy sports cars with full-time contracts, Sprod has just bought a little runabout to indulge his love of fishing. He still works part-time (drives trucks and excavators) and enjoys spending time with Natalie, the love of his life.

Sometimes it's the team and players with feet firmly planted on the ground that, in the end, achieve more for themselves and their club.

Glenn Sprod is one of those quiet achievers.

SOCCEROO 27-MAN SQUAD

Frank Farina will cull this squad to 18 by the first week in November. This Friday (Australian time) we should know the composition of the Brazil squad to face Farina's Roos.

SQUAD:
Agostino, Paul
TSV 1860 Munich
Aloisi, John
Coventry City
Babic, Zeljko
Marconi Stallions
Bosnich, Mark
Manchester United

Joe Skoko

Corica, Steve
Wolverhampton Wanderers
Emerton, Brett
Sydney Olympic
Foxe Hayden
Hiroshima Sanfrecce
Johnson, Richard
Watford
Kalac, Zeljko
Roda JC
Kewell, Harry
Leeds United
Laybutt, Steve
Bellmare Hiratsuka
Lazaridis, Stan
Birmingham City
Moore, Craig
Rangers
Mori, Damian
Adelaide Force
Muscat, Kevin
Wolves, Wanderers
Okon, Paul
Fiorentina
Popovic, Tony
Hiroshima Sanfrecce
Schwarzer, Mark
Middlesbrough
Simunic, Josip
Hamburg
Skoko, Josip
Hajduk Split
Tiatto, Danny

Harry Kewell: he'll be there for Brazil

Manchester City
Tobin, Alex
Adelaide Force
Vidmar, Aurelio
Adelaide Force
Vidmar, Tony
Rangers
Viduka, Mark
Celtic
Zdrilic, David
SSV Ulm
Zelic, Ned
TSV 1860 Munich

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NSL ROUND 4: WHAT A GOAL BY RUFER

Cosmos hotshot striker Danny Watkins.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK:

"If he's fit and ready he will play. He's not here to have his photo taken and eat cake." Zoran Matic on new keeper Vilson Knezevic.

"If Pablo (Cardozo) is not the best striker in the country I will run naked down Pitt Street." Branko Culina in an expansive mood.

"Playing for Leeds could set me up for life and [coach Ken] Dugdale wanted me to play in crap games against Oman and Singapore."

Former Glory boy Danny Hay. Apologies to our readers in Oman and Singapore.

Sydney United went ahead through an own goal by Carlton, before Carlton hit back through goals to Babic and Maloney.

Internet report on the Sydney United v Marconi game posted by ABC news on the Optus Internet News site. What on earth are they on about??

South Melbourne defeated Gippsland 3-0, with Michael Curcija scoring two goals and Con Blaxos the third.

The same site. Apologies to Olyroo Con Blatsis.

***NSL top scorers: Marth (Carlton) and Curcija (South) both head the charts with four apiece.**

Round 4 99/00: 48, 583

Round 4 98/99 52, 066

Cumulative after round four this year: 185, 688, 288 more than this time last year.

Round four in review

It was a weekend of sweet revenge for a couple of strikers Northern Spirit let go in the off-season. Paul Foster, brother of Socceroo Craig, scored for his new club Brisbane Strikers in their 2-2 home draw against Spirit.

And on Friday night Daniel Watkins, on loan to Canberra Cosmos from Spirit, also had his scoring boots on as he helped Cosmos win against Power in Sydney.

Ironically strikers, or the lack thereof, has continued to plague Northern Spirit this year. Clayton Zane is currently residing in the Norwegian league while Tony Perinich is still recovering from injury (despite making his comeback on the weekend.)

One bright light for the Spirit was the debut of Abbas Saad, who scored right at the end. If he can regain fitness then he will be a very handy acquisition. But, as fellow Spirit striker Tony Perinich will attest, it is not easy to come back from injury.

However the goal of the round surely goes to New Zealand superstar Wynton Rufer. All who saw his goal against the four-match unbeaten Breakers on Friday night said it was of the highest order. Inside Soccer's Mark Fowler noted it was "pure class" as did every other scribe.

Even the Breakers were complimentary. Defender Glenn Sprod described it as a "great finish."

On the same evening Canberra Cosmos contributed to Parramatta Power's ordinary beginning to the season with a hard fought 2-3 away win.

Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni, who has done a wonderful job at the club since arriving late last season, said: "Obviously delighted with the win. We looked more like a team on Friday night - better shape and organization.

"The new signings (Winnie and Hamilton) fitted in very very well. Daniel Watkins is a natural goalscorer in the six yard box. His attitude and professionalism have been first class," said Sermanni of his on-loan striker.

The west Sydney derby between Sydney Utd and Marconi, played in front of a disappointing crowd of just over 3,000 (heavy rain had fallen) saw the return of last year's Warren Medal winner, Brad Maloney.

And what a difference he made. After a plucky United pushed their more well-to-do local rivals, it was Maloney who got the Stallions across with a promising second half performance. Eddie Krncevic, coach of Marconi, was just glad to get the points after not playing well. "We didn't get the points when we played well in previous rounds, then after playing so-so against Sydney Utd. we get full points. So what's better, playing not so well but picking up three points?" he said laughing. "Maloney's a big force for us, he came on fresh off the bench, yes, he is a big inspiration."

Round five preview

Looking ahead to this weekend and Sydney is the place to be with two blockbusters: Spirit v Olympic on Friday night and on Sunday Eddie Krncevic's Marconi plays the back-to-back champions South Melbourne. "From our point of view we have to get some consistency back with a good result this week. I don't think there is any specific danger in their side, they are an all-round quality side," said South coach Ange Postecoglou about Marconi.

He added that the announcement of Manchester United as their opponents in the World Club Championships had not affected his players' NSL focus, but he believed the catch-up games after the tournament may cause some problems for his talented side.

Eddie Krncevic said: "Every team has weaknesses but we will keep that to ourselves. Having said that, they are a quality side, they should be respected and we would like to redeem ourselves in front of our fans," ended Krncevic.

The Olympic game on Friday night is a chance for another Sydney side, Northern Spirit to redeem itself in front of its home fans after a forgettable first Spirit Park match against Breakers. Coach Graham Arnold said in a press release that his side can look forward to the game with 'confidence' after his charges showed 'pride in their Northern Spirit shirt' in their come from behind 2-2 draw in Queensland last weekend.

In other matches Canberra has their tails up but Glory will go out to win this Friday night: expect a high-scoring encounter especially with Watkins de Jesus and (possibly) Kalogeracos on the park.

Joint league-leaders Carlton will play Force in Adelaide on the same night. Two strong defences will ensure only a goal or two should separate these clubs, but expect a Force surprise win.

The Kingz and Wollongong should be highly entertaining; Kingz to continue their good form but new Wolf Stuart Young should make some headway.

Strikers v Power. Sooner or later the Power boys should come good, expect an away win or draw on Saturday.

The other Saturday game is Falcons and Breakers. Breakers will go all out to win, coach Lee Sterrey no doubt roasting his players for a lack of commitment against Kingz; Newcastle to win while on Sunday Knights play Sydney United.

	(Overall)								(Home)					(Away)				
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A
CARLTON	4	3	1	0	10	2	**10**	8	1	1	0	3	2	2	0	0	7	0
BRIS STRIKERS	4	3	1	0	6	3	**10**	3	1	1	0	4	3	2	0	0	2	0
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	4	2	2	0	8	3	**8**	5	0	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	5	0
PERTH GLORY	4	2	2	0	7	3	**8**	4	0	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	4	0
SOUTH MELB	4	2	0	2	6	3	**6**	3	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	1	3
CANB COSMOS	4	2	0	2	6	4	**6**	2	1	0	2	3	2	1	0	0	3	2
New. Breakers	4	1	3	0	7	5	**6**	2	0	2	0	3	3	1	1	0	4	2
Marconi	4	1	2	1	6	9	**5**	-3	0	0	1	0	4	1	2	0	6	5
Wollongong Wolves	4	1	2	1	5	8	**5**	-3	1	0	1	2	5	0	2	0	3	3
Parramatta Power	4	1	1	2	6	7	**4**	-1	1	1	1	5	5	0	0	1	1	2
Northern Spirit	4	1	1	2	4	6	**4**	-2	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	4	4
Sydney United	4	1	1	2	4	6	**4**	-2	1	0	2	3	5	0	1	0	1	1
Adelaide Force	4	1	1	2	3	6	**4**	-3	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	1	5
Football Kingz	4	1	1	2	3	6	**4**	-3	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	2	3
Gippsland Falcons	4	0	2	2	2	6	**2**	-4	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	4
Melbourne Knights	4	0	0	4	2	8	**0**	-6	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	2	2	4

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Sterrey fumes while Rufer scores classic goal

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 1
Buonavoglia 6
FOOTBALL KINGZ 1
Rufer 86

Friday night at Breakers Stadium, Newcastle. Crowd 6, 045

Dino Mennillo: the former Force player had a cracker for Kingz against Breakers. Pic by Joe Palos

By Michael Kmet

It was a case of de ja vu at Breakers Stadium as a late goal once again denied Newcastle their first win at home.

Two weeks ago it was the Wolves' Saso Petrovski brilliant overhead strike. This week it was an equally impressive goal by Wynton Rufer to give the Kingz a much deserved, if not unlucky draw.

Rufer came on as a second half substitute and his side volley from outside the 18-yard box was a reminder of the lethal finishing he executed during his illustrious career in Europe.

The Breakers were lacking in the determination and grit that was used to overpower the Northern Spirit last week. Instead they were lacklustre and resorted to long balls from the back - a sure sign the team was struggling.

Breakers coach Lee Sterrey was livid after the game stating that this was collectively the worst performance by the team since he arrived at the club.

Sterrey didn't mince words in saying the performance "was an absolute disgrace", and "gone was the pride, passion, and commitment that was demonstrated by the club this season and last. At the end of the day we were lucky to get a point."

The Breakers started well when pint-sized Johnny Buonavoglia latched on to a ball from Vasko Trpcevski in the sixth minute to flick the ball over Kingz's keeper Michael Utting.

Trpcevski chipped the ball to Buonavoglia after his free kick rebounded from the wall. Buonavoglia showed a deft touch as he guided the ball with the outside of his right foot.

The Kingz had a perfect opportunity to equalize five minutes later when a Levent Osman header crashed in the right hand post. The ensuing rebound fell to Chilean Aaron Silva, who could not convert due to a fine save by Bob Catlin.

Minutes later a serious knee injury to young dynamo Greg Owens seemed to knock the stuffing out of the Breakers, and from that point the Kingz dominated the rest of the match, particularly through the midfield.

Owens appears to have medial ligament and cartilage damage to his left knee and coach Lee Sterrey concedes this may be a long-term injury.

The 7-6 shots on goal tally to the Kingz at half-time was indicative of an entertaining first half, and particularly entertaining first thirty minutes. Two of the Kingz' best chances came in the 26th and 27th minute, but were denied on both opportunities by scrambling defence from Bob Catlin and Andy Roberts.

The first opportunity came when Levent Osman was given clear space to run at Catlin. From Osman's shot Catlin parried the ball and Roberts was forced to throw his body on the line to save the Breakers. Referee Con Diomis rejected claims of handball and replays showed this was the correct decision.

A minute later it was Dino Mennillo who found space on the left. His shot forced a one hand save from Catlin.

As the game progressed the very physical but clean Kingz outfit exerted more pressure on the Breakers. The Kingz dominated through the midfield and the Breakers' hard working midfielder Mark Wilson seemed to be the only one displaying any effort through the middle.

At the back, the solid Breakers trio of Catlin, Pryce, and Todd McManus were holding the team together despite being under constant pressure. In fact, the physical tussle between Pryce, McManus, and the Kingz' Fred De Jong was one of the highlights of the match, as was the penetration and running of Dino Mennillo down the left sideline.

While the first half was an entertaining affair the second half turned into a dreary encounter. The Kingz continued to find room in the midfield through Mennillo and Osman, but could not penetrate the Breakers defence.

When the Breakers had possession they pumped the ball forward, but this was easy fodder for the Kingz' defensive giants Che Bunce and Ivan Vicelich.

The Breakers were heading to an unlikely victory when Rufer stepped in and brilliantly volleyed home to give the Kingz some consolation.

Kingz' assistant coach Shane Rufer was happy with his team's effort. "We can only perform better," Rufer stated. "The team is starting gel and we believe we had enough chances to win tonight. Newcastle is a difficult road trip, so to grab a least one point is a good effort."

Rufer also praised his brother's influence on the match. "Wynton's presence on the pitch was a big boost to the team when it looked like we were going to walk away with no points tonight."

The Kingz and former Breakers player Robbie Middleby was also happy on how the team was progressing. "We deserved to win tonight," Middleby said. "The team struggled with cohesion in the first two games, but we are now hitting our straps and starting to show promise. I was a bit nervous coming home to Newcastle because it is my home town and always a tough away match, but out last performance against South Melbourne gave the team plenty of encouragement."

However, the last word must go to Lee Sterrey. When quizzed on the healthy home crowd of over 6,000 Sterrey replied, "We won't be letting the crowd and supporters down again, like we did tonight."

Sterrey hinted there will not be changes for this week's tricky away game to Gippsland but emphatically stated, "This will want to be a one-off performance."

Wynton Rufer: he's still got it!

MATCH STATS

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS
Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, McManus, Dodd (Tomich 80), Wilson, Buonavoglia, Angieski, Owens (Sprod 15), Trpcevski (Juchniewicz 60), Harper.

FOOTBALL KINGZ F.C.
Utting, Ngata (Jackson 50), Bunce, Perry, De Jong, Mennillo, Middleby (Stergiopoulos 80), Osman, Vicelich, Moya, Silva (Rufer 57).

Yellows
Kingz: Mennillo 21, Vicelich 92

Best Players
3 DINO MENNILLO (KINGZ)
2 Shane Pryce (Breakers)
1 Levent Osman (Kingz)

Referee: Con Diomis

NEWCASTLE NEWS

Breakers' Robbie Angieski celebrated his twentieth birthday on Monday (25/10) by making his Breakers and NSL debut against the Kingz.

Newcastle captain Shane Pryce was presented with a plaque by owner David Hall in front of his home crowd for playing 100 games in the NSL. Pryce's 100th game was against the Northern Spirit at North Sydney Oval last week.

The Dutch Paralympic Soccer team was in Newcastle last week as part of their preparations for the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Gold medallists at the last three Olympic Games, the Dutch were using the excellent sporting facilities at the University of Newcastle and Newcastle Hockey Centre to acclimatise to Australian conditions.

This week the Dutch will be in Sydney competing against the Australian Paralympic Team.

This is the second home game straight that the Breakers have drawn over 6,000 people to their match. This is a wonderful achievement considering the highest crowd figure last season was just over 5,000. The Breakers are receiving unprecedented media coverage in the local press, radio, and T.V. channels.

The annual half-time match between the Newcastle media and mad supporters *The Rowdies* was played prior to the Kingz game.

The Rowdies made it three wins from three starts with a 1-0 result. The Maitland Mercury's Renee Valentine and NBN Newsreader Helen Kapalos were the stand outs in the media team but were let down by their male team mates. NBN Sports Reporter Jim Callagnan was quoted as saying, "I have a new respect for these guys who can run for ninety minutes", after his ten minute stint left him red faced and puffing for the next thirty minutes.

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Nine-man Cosmos powers to famous victory

NATIONAL

PARRAMATTA POWER 2
Griffiths 26, 48

CANBERRA COSMOS 3
Watkins 5, 58, de Jesus 38

Friday night at Parramatta Stadium, Sydney. Crowd 5,129

By Paul Goodwin

Teams visiting Sydney have made a habit lately of leaving town with all the points and in beating Parramatta Power 3-2 on Friday night, capital city conquerors Canberra Cosmos proved no exception.

Following hard on the heels of wins by Carlton at Marconi and Newcastle at Northern Spirit the Cosmos displayed similar virtues of commitment and tactical superiority to win a game that many thought would give the Power a first win at headquarters.

On an evening which turned decidedly cooler once the main game commenced, once another balmy spring day in Sydney had given way to a blustery change from the South, a highly vocal, if lower than expected crowd, tried to urge the home side back into the game after they had fallen behind three times.

Having overcome an early setback to equalise and then to come back a second time immediately after the restart, Parramatta just could not summon the necessary qualities a third time, to overcome a stubborn Canberra who had two players sent off in the last half hour.

Had it not been for a much improved showing by the livewire Joel Griffiths and the industry of Peter Bennett and Mile Sterjovski, Power might have been beaten even more soundly.

What a lesson it was, then, by the team of cast-offs and locals for a Parramatta side, which under another guise had won the Premiership last season.

Canberra included, for the first time, the two Scottish players they had signed during the week, David Winnie a defender who has lately been playing in Iceland and Brian Hamilton whose most recent outings have been in Sweden.

Both now in the veteran class, they brought to the side what their coach Tommy Sermanni described after the game as the extra experience the players around them really needed.

Both lasted the distance and in summing up it was an all round team effort by Canberra that snared the points for them.

Some early physical skirmishes brought cautions in the first few minutes, but the game was only into its fifth when the visitors took a shock lead from a free kick.

Ivo de Jesus swung the ball in from the left hand edge of the penalty area to the near post where Daniel Watkins arrived nicely to send a glancing header past Andrew Crews.

These two players typified the kind of players the out-of-town club are succeeding with; de Jesus was taken off the unwanted shelf in the middle of last season and has proven a match winner already, with his winner last March at Northern Spirit being a perfect example.

Watkins was put out on loan by Spirit before the current season got under way and Sermanni knows that he has a firm 12 month deal with the player and is more than happy to retain his services.

Ironic, then, that Spirit are having some trouble in scoring while Watkins found himself heading the NSL competition scorers' list after this match.

The game was an even contest after the opening goal had gone in, but Canberra's direct approach, which suited them well, was not so effective when adopted by their opponents and the long ball was used with limited success by Power on this occasion.

Ivo de Jesus silences Parramatta Stadium on Friday night after he scored against Power.

Canberra's Harry James recovered well to get in a header and deny a goal-bound Power cross in the immediate seconds after his side had taken the lead and big newcomer Hamilton did well to almost get a touch on a Cosmos corner in the 11th minute which would have made it 2-0 very early on.

Power thought they had scored in the 19th when Milan Blagojevic drove a low free kick in off the post, but the goal was disallowed for an infringement.

They did get on level terms, however, in the 26th when a high, headed clearance from the half way line by Bennett was chased through by Griffiths and with the keeper deciding to come late off his line the blond youngster managed to get his head to the ball first and it looped into an unguarded net.

The keeper, Grant Barlow, timed his move much better in the 34th to thwart Sterjovski, who had made a strong run down the left and into the area and looked set to have a crack on goal.

Canberra regained the lead four minutes after this save, their creative force Gabriel Gonzales turning away from his marker within sight of goal and sending a super pass out to Watkins on the right flank.

A low cross by young Watkins found Power skipper Richard Plesa in a bit of a tangle inside his own area, as de Jesus applied the pressure and when de Jesus had a second, fierce stab at the contested ball, he managed to find the net from 8 yards out, the spin that he exerted putting the keeper completely off balance.

As soon as the second half began Canberra almost scored again, James seeing his firm shot well saved by Andrew Crews after a clever exchange of passes between Jason Polak and Watkins.

Two minutes after the restart and Parramatta were level once more as Steve Eagleton got away down the right and sent a fine, early cross in for Griffiths to latch onto and pick his spot nicely from 10 yards.

Polak and Gonzales continued to hold sway in midfield and it did look as if the home side was missing the suspended Walter Ardone badly.

From Polak's pass in the 57th de Jesus then steered his shot across the face of the goal with a relieved Crews policing the ball to safety.

The best Power could offer in reply was a weak header from Griffiths into the keeper's arms from Plesa's free kick.

Canberra then grabbed what proved to be the winner, a minute later, when a completely unmarked Gonzales was allowed to get away down the right and cross smartly to the far post, the ball being dummied through by the wily de Jesus enabling Watkins to score his fourth goal of the campaign with an unhindered, cool finish.

Soon after this goal Cosmos defender David Milin received his second caution and Canberra drew on their resources to keep Parramatta at bay.

Three good chances came the way of Parramatta in the last five minutes, all after Gonzales had been dismissed by New Zealand referee Derek Rugg for an off-the-ball incident which left Jacob Burns sprawling.

The quickly-taken free kick, following the send off, found Sterjovski inside he area, but his quick turn and shot saw the ball well smothered by Barlow.

A big move with some nice passing by Power, which had good support from the local home crowd, led to Griffiths finding only the side netting in stoppage time and in a last gasp effort a brave save by Barlow prevented Sterjovski again getting on the end of a Jon Angelucci cross just moments before the final whistle blew.

Canberra mentor Sermanni was pleased that his side was so solid defensively and while surprised by some refereeing decisions had no arguments with the two dismissals. He felt his side had been too robust in the first period and told his players, at the interval discussion, to curb that part of their game.

He was always confident that his side could score goals if they got the service and now that de Jesus has overcome a niggling back complaint which affected his pre season preparation he felt that the team is doing so much better.

Cosmos' Jason Polak and Jacob Burns battle it out on Friday night

He was pleased that his plan to catch out a rather flat Power backline paid off and it was mainly a matter of his own defence becoming more compact and the arrival of the new players which had made that task so much easier now.

David Mitchell blamed poor concentration for what he described as some sloppy goals and was disappointed with the disallowed goal and also in not being awarded a penalty when Sterjovski was impeded.

Other than that he was full of praise for Canberra's 'getting stuck in' and hinted that David Barrett would be back in his own side for next week's game, after a solid run in the youth team which included a goal. It must be said that Parramatta are not playing with much conviction so far and are a shadow of the side which carried all before them last season.

MATCH STATS

PARRAMATTA POWER: A Crews, R Plesa (J Angelucci 67), J Vrkic (A Elrich 63), M Santalab, S Eagleton, P Bennett, S Berry, J Burns, M Blagojevic (J Gibson 80), M. Sterjovski, J Griffiths.

CANBERRA COSMOS: G Barlow, D Milin, D Burt, J Polak, D Winnie, D Watkins (M Musitano 71), B Hamilton, H James (G Kolpak 84), R Hooker, I de Jesus (T Popovich 67), G Gonzales.

Yellow Cards: Milan Blagojevic 2 (P), David Winnie 3 (C), David Milin 9 (C), Grant Barlow 25 (C), Richard Plesa 30, (P), Ivo de Jesus 64 (C)
Red Card: David Milin 63, Gabriel Gonzales 86 (both C)

Best Players

3 JOEL GRIFFITHS (P)
2 Danny Burt (C)
1 Robbie Hooker (C)

Referee: Derek Hugg (NZ)

Packer packs punch leaving Knights win-less

CARLTON 2
Marth 51, Lapsansky 70

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
Trupkovic 85

Friday night at Olympic Park, Melbourne. Crowd 4,151

Joe 'Tricky' Tricarico against Knights on Friday night. Pic by Michael Cronin.

By Mark Fisher

Carlton will be facing battles on two key fronts this season, and doesn't look like shying away from either of them. One will be to make inroads in attracting a bigger audience to its new season home at Olympic Park.

About 4,000 in attendance on Friday night suggests some more work needs to be done in that respect, although the beergarden, the razzle dazzle and the accompanying fireworks does help to add some valuable atmosphere for the punters.

On the field, the Blues are right on track to make the finals, especially if they play as impressively as they did in winning 2-1 on Friday night.

The Melbourne Knights' job ahead, however, may be much more difficult, particularly when one considers the potential fallout from four straight losses from the same number of matches, and each in convincing fashion, it must be said.

Going down by a one-goal margin somewhat flattered the visitors, who were largely outpossessed by Carlton's professional midfield unit. Coach Joe Biskic, the players and the future of the Knights are all particularly dependent on results this season.

Some pundits believe that anything short of an unlikely finals appearance will spell disaster, in the form of relegation from the very league they last won only seven seasons ago.

To the match itself, and Carlton's win was secured thanks largely to the influence of rising star Andy Packer. Packer's pugnacious presence, natural skill and tenacity at the ball makes him ideal in setting up goal-scoring opportunities, which he did on a number of occasions during this particular match.

His first major involvement was to send a good cross to Andrew Marth inside the box six minutes in, but Marth's header went just to the right of goal.

Combining with Packer was Archie Thompson, who tested marker Rody Vargas early with some incisive runs at goal. Vargas stood out for the Knights in defence, putting in the yards to keep an ominous Blues attack unrewarded in the first half.

The match was played scrappily throughout, which led to the over-zealous referee Matthew Breeze producing a total of eight yellow cards and one red.

The first player to be booked was Mark Silic for the Knights, whose recurring bouts of dissent ultimately led to his send-off late in the second half.

In addition to Packer, another performer in midfield for Carlton was Joe Tricarico, who teamed well with David Terminello to look for openings in the Knights back line.

Big Dave McPherson and Ivan Kelic before the game. Pic by Michael Cronin.

A good chance fell to Thompson in the 30th minute, but his header was met by an off-the-line clearance from Zeljko Susa, after a pressurizing build-up by Lubo Lapsansky and Mike Conroy.

The Knights could have taken the lead themselves twelve minutes later, when Susa let go a great cross from Ante Kovacevic, only for its recipient Paul Urlovic to shoot over the bar from virtually point-blank range!

From then on, however, Carlton clearly held the ascendency.

After the half-time break, Andrew Marth had two promising chances at goal. The first was courtesy of a Thompson cross, helped on by Conroy's header, which Marth sent just over the bar to the exasperation of the crowd.

The second chance however reaped the desired result for Carlton. Andy Packer sent a pin-point lob from behind the edge of the box to the man they call "Stabber", and he in turn chipped cleverly over Martin John's head and into the goal.

The Blues were up 1-0 at the 51st minute mark.

Whilst Marth was having a night of it, the same couldn't be said for Conroy, who had to strive to make headway up front.

He missed a real chance in the 54th minute to increase the score, sending Thompson's low cross wide when it should have been netted. Carlton boss Stuart Munro expressed some sentiments afterwards that the former Blackpool striker was still coming to terms with the improved standard of the Australian national league.

Shortly afterwards, Tricarico could have had a goal against his name when a Packer cross was headed wide.

The Knights were trying desperately to keep Carlton from increasing the margin, with the adverse effect of increasing their own foul count.

The stranglehold the Blues were maintaining in midfield virtually condemned the Knights to only the occasional counter-attack.

The score remained 1-0 until the 70th minute, when Lapsansky produced a goal that brought the house down. Unmarked and about 35 metres out from goal, he launched a curling thunderbolt which sailed deep into the left side of the net, with a vain attempt by the Knights' keeper to reach it highlighting the accuracy of the strike.

With a two goal lead, that would have been enough for Carlton to close out the game completely, especially considering their three man defence had kept Trupkovic and Silic quiet all night.

Yet much to the chagrin of Stuart Munro and the Carlton fans, Dean Anastasiadis conceded a goal from a lapse of judgment late in the match. An innocuous ball falling to Sean Douglas was set upon by Anastasiadis five minutes from time, but his resultant mix-up with Douglas allowed the ball to spill to Mijo Trupkovic for the Knights.

Trupkovic immediately saw daylight between the 'keeper and the unguarded goal, and struck from about 40 metres out to pull one back for the visitors.

The play had a touch of the ridiculous about it, as Anastasiadis chased frantically after the ball, but he got to it a fraction too late.

It must have felt like deja vu for the Blues' gloveman, whose willingness to clear the ball from well in front of the box had allowed Gippsland's Clayton Bell to score in much the same fashion in Round 2.

The Knights ran out of time to try and secure a draw, after Silic's petulance saw him earn an early shower plus a verbal serve from Joe Biskic. Biskic later couldn't hide his disappointment with his player's actions.

"We had five minutes to go - we tried to push and get a result. That send-off, it knocked me down - me and the whole team", he said. It is also expected that Silic will receive a fine from his club as well.

Stuart Munro saved special praise for player Andy Packer towards the end of the post-match media conference. "Andy's a modern league player, he is just so strong."

He also appeared quite happy overall with the team's performance in their second home game of the season. "We followed on from the first game here. It was a lot more like us".

Stuart Munro possesses an embarrassment of riches all over the park. If this provides him with a weekly selection headache, then surely that's the sort of headache many of his counterparts would love to have.

MATCH STATS

CARLTON:
Dean Anastasiadis, Dave McPherson, Craig Deans, Sean Douglas, Andrew Marth (John Markovski 82"), Lubo Lapsansky, Archie Thompson (Alex Moreira 90+"), Mike Conroy, David Terminello (Mark Atkinson 71"), Joe Tricarico, Andy Packer.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS:
Martin John, Roddy Vargas, Jason Vukadin (Joe Rahjer 74"), Mark Silic, Dragi Nastevski, Paul Urlovic (Alex Kiratzoglou 60"), Paul Magdic (Michael Reda 74"), Zeljko Susa, Ransford Banini, Ante Kovacevic, Mijo Trupkovic.

Yellows
Silic, Kovacevic, Nastevski, Vukadin (Knights)
McPherson, Douglas, Terminello (Carlton)
Reds
Silic (Knights)

Best Player
3 - ANDY PACKER (CARLTON)
2 - Joe Tricarico (Carlton)
1 - Craig Deans (Carlton)

Referee: Simon Micallef

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Saad ending for Strikers as Spirit earns point

BRISBANE STRIKERS 2
Foster 7, Grierson 40

NORTHERN SPIRIT 2
Bingley 35, Saad 89

Saturday night at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane, Crowd: 4,009

Strikers defender Glenn Gwynne.

By Cameron Atfield

Top-of-the-table Brisbane's dream start to the NSL campaign came to an end at Suncorp Metway Stadium on Saturday night when Northern Spirit snatched a lucky draw at the death.

Spirit debutante Abbas Saad broke the hearts of the majority of the 4009 present when he capitalised on a Clint Bolton mistake to score the equalising goal to finish the game at two goals a piece.

Bolton could only parry a shot into Saad's path, and he had no problems putting the ball into the back of the net.

Saad was delighted to score on his Spirit debut.

"It was my first match in one and a half years because I've been out injured, so scoring was a good confidence-booster for me," he said.

"It was a great game, a good attacking game, and in the end we fought really hard and deserved the draw."

After another dose of truly embarrassing pre-match "entertainment", Brisbane dominated from the opening whistle.

They treated the disappointing crowd with some of the best football seen at Suncorp Metway Stadium for some time.

It took just seven minutes for them to turn their domination into points on the scoreboard, when Paul Foster showed why he was so highly regarded in Hong Kong's professional league.

Foster, who scored 68 goals over three years in Hong Kong, netted the ball on the half volley after Stuart McLaren headed down a Nick Meredith corner.

The goal was Foster's third in as many games, and this one against the club that let him go last season would have been the sweetest of them all.

Spirit's problems were further magnified when captain Robbie Slater came off with a calf injury in the 17th minute. The injury could rule the former Socceroo out of action for six weeks.

Sean Cranney came on for Slater, renewing his playing ties with brother Troy.

Without Slater, the Spirit lacked any real midfield direction and the Strikers were able to maintain their dominance but they were unable to turn it into goals.

In the 24th minute, Foster got on the end of a smart cross by Dwyer but could only hit in into the side netting.

Two minutes later and Bolton was called into action at the other end, when he smothered a promising Tony Perinich attack.

It was a sign of things to come as Sean Cranney came back to haunt his former club.

Cranney provided the header for Matthew Bingley to score with a neat left-footer.

The Spirit goal lifted the pace of the game, with both teams determined to gain the upper hand in a frantic end-to-end tussle.

The Strikers deservedly went ahead in the 40th minute through new English signing Peter Griersen.

Griersen only received his playing clearance on Thursday and the former Liverpool junior was keen to impress.

He was on the end of a Foster flick on from a long Meredith corner, and poked it in for a well-deserved 2-1 lead which they took to the break.

It is a testimony to the spirit in which the game was played that it took 49 minutes for referee Gerry Connolly to issue his first caution of the game, when Spirit player Luke Casserly made a nasty tackle on Foster.

Minutes later, and Casserly was perhaps lucky not to be sent off for a challenge on Pilic.

Pilic, who was sporting a head bandage after a cut earlier in the game, must have wondered if there was a big target sign on his head.

He and Casserly both went in for the ball, and Casserly's boot made contact with Pilic's head.

Twenty-one year-old Pilic went off for further treatment, leaving the Strikers down to 10 men for eight minutes.

The home side's first booking came when captain Stuart McLaren was punished for a heavy challenge just outside the box.

Casserly's resulting free kick caused no trouble for Bolton.

In one of the Strikers' most promising movements, Meredith went on a great run down the left and sent in a perfect cross to Griersen in the 70th minute.

Griersen managed to pull it back to Pilic, who mis-hit the ball. It looped around in the air, and in the end Perosh did well to push it over the bar.

There was a golden opportunity for a third Strikers goal four minutes later, when Pilic's cross went over the heads of three unmarked players.

Pilic's body language after the poor cross suggested he knew how good a chance it was.

Almost immediately, the Strikers had the Spirit on the back foot again.

In one of the more entertaining shots on goal you could hope to see, Dwyer sent in a cross at a tight angle from the by-line. The cross deflected off a Spirit defender and went straight back to Dwyer.

Lying on his back, the ever-impressive Scot sent in a shot which Perosh took comfortably.

The Strikers' domination never looked like being tested until the final minute, when Saad scored the late equaliser.

A 2-2 score full time, was a relief for Spirit who would have to feel lucky to escape with a draw.

Strikers coach John Kosmina said although he was disappointed at dropping two points, he was extremely happy with his side's performance.

"It was a fantastic performance by us tonight, it really was," he said. "There was some great stuff played, but we were unlucky with the way it went."

He was also very pleased with debutante Griersen's effort.

"I went to watch him (at the Gold Coast) last season, but he was injured and out for seven weeks," he said.

Matt Bingley: Spirit scorer.

"I'd never seen him play until this season, but I'd heard a lot about him. He's some player."

Griersen was also delighted with his start, but not with the result.

"I was happy to get a goal on my debut, but I'd rather have a win," he said. "The lads are all a bit disappointed because we really controlled the game."

Griersen, who only signed for the Strikers on Thursday, said it was quite a shock to find himself in the starting line up so early.

"I was happy to just get a contract," he said. "So to get a start and score - well I'm delighted. But it's just not the same if we don't win."

Spirit coach Graham Arnold said although he was disappointed with his side's performance, he could take some positives away from the game

"I'll be the first one to say we didn't play to our potential," he said.

But he said after two straight losses, it was good to get some points on the board.

"You have to start from somewhere, and this is a good place to start from," he said.

Goalscorer Abbas Saad was full of praise for his opponents.

"Not many teams are going to come up here and beat them because they showed a lot of guts, so full marks to Kossie and the boys," he said.

The Strikers play Parramatta Power next Saturday night at Suncorp Metway Stadium.

MATCH STATS

BRISBANE STRIKERS
1. Clint Bolton, 2. Glenn Gwynne, 4. Andrew Davidson, 6. Brad Ditton, 8. David Pilic, 9. Paul Foster, 12. Peter Dwyer, 13. Stuart McLaren, 16. Peter Griersen, 17. Jeromy Harris (15. Leo Langone 90+'), 18. Nick Meredith. Subs not used: 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Matt Bell

NORTHERN SPIRIT
1. John Perosh, 2. Robert Enes (26. Jack Sobjczyk), 3. Matthew Langdon, 4. Matthew Bingley, 5. Mark Rudan, 6. Luke Casserly, 7. Robbie Slater (30. Sean Cranney 17'), 8. Tony Perinich, 9. David Seal (28. Abbas Saad 46'), 11. Troy Cranney, 19. Graham Arnold

Yellows:
Brisbane: Stuart McLaren 67'
Spirit: Luke Casserly 49'

Best Players:
1. PETER DWYER (STRIKERS)
2. David Pilic (Strikers)
3. Paul Foster (Strikers)

Referee: Gerry Connolly

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INSIDE SOCCER

Ratcliffe slams United's 'gutless second half'

SYDNEY UNITED 1
Longo o/g 21
MARCONI STALLIONS 2
Maloney 63, Savoca o/g 67

Sunday afternoon at Edensor Park, Sydney. Crowd: 3,038

By Steven Webb

Marconi, coming off of 0-4 loss at home to Carlton, were fortunate to come away from Sydney United Sports Centre with three points on Sunday.

Sydney United sparkled in the first half, creating numerous chances. Marconi, losing a player and scoring an own goal, didn't look in the hunt.

Things changed at half time. Sydney United players stopped wanting the ball. Marconi, with the addition of Brad Maloney, started competing for it. And they gratefully took the game Sydney United threw away.

A downpour before the match kept supporters away and left pools in both goalmouths. Otherwise the playing surface was serviceable.

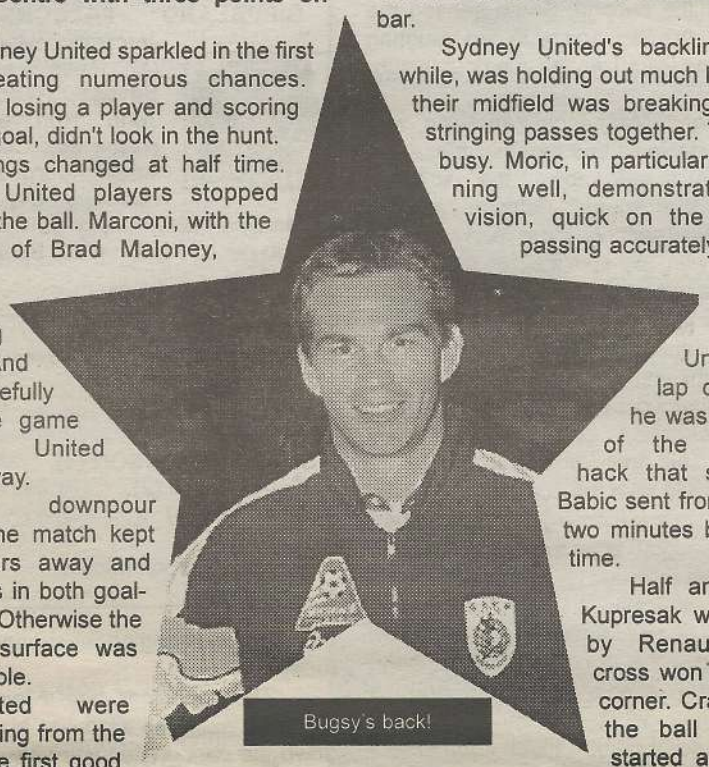
United were enterprising from the start. The first good chance missed was in the 12th minute when the ball fell for both Moric and Jermen in front of the Marconi goal. Jermen took it and hit it over the bar.

Jermen continued to be a problem for Marconi's defence, Gibson only sometimes getting the better of him.

United's Pondeljak shot from 20 metres in the 20th minute, forcing a diving Turnbull to concede a corner. But Turnbull was nowhere a minute later when Longo opened the scoring - heading in against his own team.

Minutes later United were again on the attack, Rastall crossing to Jermen who fouled a defender while heading over the bar.

Sydney United's backline, meanwhile, was holding out much better. And their midfield was breaking fast and stringing passes together. They were busy. Moric, in particular, was running well, demonstrating good vision, quick on the turn and passing accurately.


Bugsy's back!

As part of a United overlap on the left he was the victim of the sweeping hack that saw Mark Babic sent from the field two minutes before half time.

Half an hour in, Kupresak was beaten by Renaud whose cross won Marconi a corner. Crawley took the ball well and started a break for United that saw the ball falling for Pondeljak. His soft shot was tipped by the diving Turnbull onto the post.

On half time Kupresak put Jermen through but United were again denied by the combination of Turnbull's outstretched hands and the upright.

Harry Karl - who had some near flashes of brilliance for Marconi with what turned out to be a harmless overhead shot and a strong run into the United penalty area - pounced on a mistake from Kupresak in time added on to hit a long, hard drive into Crawley's arms.

Just before the half time whistle Smith made an important intercept as United seemed to have cut open the Marconi defence for the umpteenth time.

Significant half time changes were Marconi gaining Maloney and Sydney United losing Moric ... and the will to win.

Jermen had one flourish as the second half began, Turnbull pushing his header wide. Rastall had a shot blocked and McDonald made an important steal off Pondeljak's toes after a promising United build-up.

Pondeljak put a dangerous low ball in for Jermen and Genc hit a shot from outside the Marconi area. But United's left side was left understaffed for much of the second half and too often the home players were caught ball watching.

This was punished most severely in the 63rd minute when Maloney swept in to put the ball away after the keeper and two United defenders failed to clear a Zeljko Babic header.

Maloney, as United supporters were saying, continued to be the root of all evil.

Babic was in the action minutes later: first booked for stomping and then claiming what turned out to be Vince Savoca's own goal.

Sydney United rallied with a Jermen shot into the side netting.

If an equaliser was to come it seemed it had to come from Jermen. But just when the home side again appeared threatening, setting up a free kick outside the Marconi penalty area, Jermen struck Farah and was sent off.

Instead of being their man-of-the match Jermen fell into disrepute, later described by his coach as selfish and unprofessional.

With numbers equal, Marconi just had to hold on.

As the game wound down, a Bosnar cross found Kupresak (playing a forward role for much of the second half) who delivered a soft header to Turnbull. Sydney United coach David Ratcliffe almost has a dangerous team to work with.

Some depth and experience and they could be contenders. But after this game Ratcliffe lamented what he called his team's "gutless second half". What could he do with "people who don't want to win"?

United didn't take their chances, he said, and conceded "nothing goals".

He didn't see the absence of Joe Moric in the second half as being part of the problem. "Everything changed at half time," he said. "We stopped going to the ball first."

Ratcliffe said, "We missed a killer blow before half time. We can play football but can't afford to give goals away."

Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic was understandably beaming. And impressed with his team's performance in the second half. They played better with ten men and tried to keep possession, he said.

He credited Maloney not only for his goal, but also for the way he inspired the team.

MATCH STATS

SYDNEY UNITED: John Crawley, Velimir Kupresak, Eddy Bosnar, Vince Savoca, Nahuel Arrarte, Mario Jermen, Ante Moric (Matthew Zec 73), Tom Pondeljak, Kain Rastall, Aytec Genc, Joe Moric (Mark Racker 45)

MARCONI: Michael Turnbull, Chad Gibson, Mark Babic, Dominic Longo (Buddy Farah 47), Pan-Kuen Kim (Kris Trajanovski 77), Darren McDonald, Zeljko Babic, Mike Smith, Danny Invincible, Harry Karl (Brad Maloney 45), Brendan Renaud

Yellows:
McDonald 34, Z. Babic 67, Maloney 74, Invincible 83
Red Card: M. Babic 43, Jermen 71

Best Player
3 BRAD MALONEY
2. Tom Pondeljak
1 Joe Moric

Referee: Mark Shield

Big Marconi central defender Mark Babic: a rare red card for the cultured stopper.

Star turn Mario Jermen (ctr) of Sydney United. He then spoiled things by getting red-carded

South win the 'physical battle' says Hopkins

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3

Orlic 35, Blatsis 58, Curcija 71.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

Sunday afternoon at Lakeside Stadium, Melbourne.

Crowd 7,000 (approx)

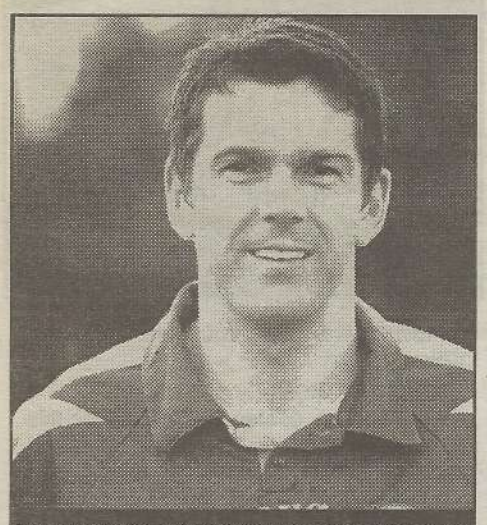
South keeper Milan Udvaracz (left): his massive kick in the wind set up goal three for the champions. With him is late sub Anthony Magnacca.

By Alan Clark

South Melbourne's renowned Bob Jane form record was retained in what eventually proved to be a comfortable 3-0 win over Gippsland Falcons on Sunday. Two David Clarkson corners - one in each half - proved the Falcons' downfall, and debut goalkeeper Milan Udvaracz was instrumental in the third.

But Falcons were not to be overrun during the match, and a tighter score-line would not have surprised.

Central defender Nick Orlic was in the right pace to bundle the ball over the line in the 35th minute after a string of corners had finally borne fruit (some outlets credited this to Michael Curcija).



Falcons coach Jeff Hopkins: was disappointed his side was outmuscled.

Goran Lozanovski normally swings them in, but because of Lozanovski's absence from this week's South Melbourne line-up through injury, it became hard-working midfielder Clarkson's responsibility.

Clarkson had sent in the latest of a series of dangerous corners to where the two tall defenders Nick Orlic and Steve Iosifidis had been brought.

Falcons had manage to partly clear, but the ball fell loose and was swung over again for Michael Curcija, whose intelligent flick may itself have resulted in the goal, but Orlic ensured that it did, despite the close attentions of Dean Fak at the post.

The second was also from a Clarkson corner falling to a player who is principally paid for defensive duties, following sustained South Melbourne pressure early in the second half.

Clarkson's driven corner was only partly cleared to where it fell for Con Blatsis just inside the penalty-area.

Blatsis' sweetly-struck volley crashed the ball high into the top corner.

"We've got two or three players who hit dead balls pretty well and Clarky's one of them. (But) Lozza's still handy to have," said South coach Ange Postecoglou with a smile after the game.

Lozanovski will be missing for about five weeks.

Gippsland Falcons also had an absence of a key player through injury, and one whose return to Bob Jane would have been welcomed by the South faithful.

New signing Mehmed Durakovic, long a crowd favourite when wearing a South Melbourne shirt, was not fit to play this week, and according to Falcons' coach Jeff Hopkins was not risked.

"He was close to being right (to play today). But although it was a very important game for us today, risking Mehmed (after he's been out) for six or eight weeks went against him.

"Hopefully now he'll be right for next week."

The contest was concluded mid-way through the second half with South's third. Udvaracz took advantage of the strong tail-wind he now benefited from, and let loose a towering goal-kick which troubled the back-pedalling Falcons' defence.

Curcija won the sprint for the ball to place it wide of the blameless Bojo Jevdjevic.

Falcons could have opened the scoring themselves mid-way through the half:

Manny Gotis' header from Andy Vargas' cross only marginally cleared the cross-bar with debut goalkeeper Milan Udvaracz well beaten.

And in one of Falcons' more sparkling moves just after the half-hour with the game wide open, the experienced front runner Brian MacNicol took advantage of the space created when George Goutzioulis joined a South attack.

MacNicol sped up the left wing and sent a diagonal ball to Juan Nilo on the right. Fausto De Amicis won the challenge, but the ball fell free for Doug Marcina who in turn found the linking run of John Hutchison.

Hutchinson launched a 35 metre pile-driver which went over.

But as the second half progressed, Falcons' launched only sporadic attacks as South took possession of the ball, leaving little for the visitors.

After the second, South sensed the win was in the bag, and replaced Vaughan Coveny and Paul Trimboli in a double substitution.

Anthony Magnacca came on with John Anastasiadis and together these two fresh pairs of legs kept up the pace and pressure that meant Falcons' players were always reacting rather than creating.

But with the last kick of the game, Falcons may have at least earnt a consolation, as diminutive striker Juan Nilo burst through facing only Udvaracz with Iosifides chasing.

Udvaracz did well to block Nilo's shot which was then scrambled clear by Iosifides. The final whistle came before Falcons could take the corner.

"We were expecting a tough game," said Postecoglou after the match.

"It was that.

"I've watched the last couple of (Falcons') games, and things have been pretty tight - the opposition hasn't been able to play. We worked hard enough today to get the space, and I think we played some good one-touch stuff."

Falcons' coach Hopkins said "South won the physical battle - that's what was most disappointing about our performance today.

"The conditions had a fair bit to do with it as well - the wind was blowing right down the park. When you give a team as good as South space to play, they'll hurt you."

South Melbourne's Paul Trimboli: another influential game from 'Trimmers'.

MATCH STATS

SOUTH MELBOURNE: Milan Udvaracz, Steve Iosifidis, Nick Orlic, Con Blatsis, George Goutzioulis, David Clarkson, Steve Panopoulos, Fausto De Amicis, Paul Trimboli(Anthony Magnacca 66), Vaughan Coveny (John Anastasiadis 66), Michael Curcija (Jim Tsekinis 78).

GIPPSLAND FALCONS: Bojo Jevdjevic, Manny Gotis (c), Dean Fak, Adrian Savage, Robbie Puca, John Hutchison (Will Hastie 64), Clayton Bell, Andy Vargas (Peter Kakos 64), Doug Marcina, Brian MacNicol, Juan Nilo. Sub not used: Jonathan Buhagiar.

Yellows:
Falcons: Fak (41), Bell (61), Nilo (65)
South: Blatsis (27), Coveny (41), De Amicis (80).

Best Player:
DAVID CLARKSON (3),
Paul Trimboli (2),
Dean Fak (1)

Referee: Simon Micallef.

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Young scores on debut to save Wolves

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1 Tsekenis 77
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1 Young 78

Sunday night at Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney. Crowd 5,035

NATIONAL

MATCH STATS:

SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bouhoutsos, Thomas, Tsekenis, Baillie, Juric, Arambasic (Carle), Phillips (Mendez 72), Cardozo, Emerton, Wilson, Zorbas.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Pogliacomi, Souris, Stanton, Cervinski, Horsley, Reid (Surjan 70), Chipperfield, Harlock, Spencer (Huxley), Masi (Petrovski 82), Young.

Yellows: none

Best Players:
3. JURIC (OLYMPIC)
2. Cervinski (Wolves)
1. Young (Wolves)

Referee: Brett Hugo.

By Ben Cubby

Wollongong bounced back from last week's humiliation at the hands of Sydney Olympic to earn a 1-1 draw with the same team on a windy and wet Sunday evening at Belmore Sportsground.

Two goals in sixty seconds, late in the second half, provided rare moments of excitement for the shivering crowd.

It was not exactly champagne football - more like four litre cast wine fare - but the Wolves restored their battered pride with a gritty, tenacious performance.

The match started at a brisk pace, with both teams looking to attack down the middle of the park. Les Pogliacomi - recalled to the Wolves lineup in place of Danny Beltrame - was twice forced to punch the slippery ball to safety early on.

Brett Emerton, twisting and turning, engineered a couple of half chances for Olympic, but last week's hat-trick hero Pablo Cardozo was closely shackled by David Cervinski.

Anthony Surjan: supplied the cross for Stuart Young to open his Aussie scoring account.

At the other end of the ground, Scott Thomas was doing a similar job on Wolves dangerman Scott Chipperfield.

In the 27th minute, Esala Masi surprised everyone with a 25 metre shot on the turn that whistled just wide. Neil Harlock's low free kick drew an alert near-post save from Olympic 'keeper George Bouhoutsos shortly afterwards.

Ante Juric missed the best chance of a forgettable first half in the 37th minute. Pogliacomi flapped at a curling Cardozo cross and Juric - who seems adept at pushing forward from his defensive role - sprayed his shot well wide of an open goal.

The Wolves looked ravenous after the break. New signing Stuart Young - a former Arsenal apprentice - began to exert a strong influence in the match. He set up Chipperfield in the 49th minute, but the latter was skilfully tackled by Juric.

The pair combined again in the 55th minute, and Chipperfield's shot trickled inches wide with Bouhoutsos beaten.

Emerton broke free down the right during a long period of Olympic possession, but was foiled by a fine Masi tackle.

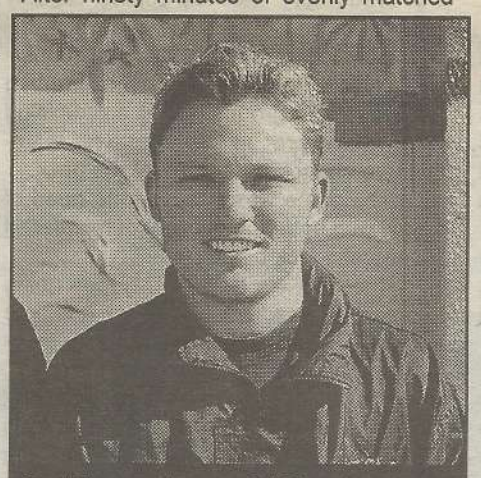
The next passage of play saw a penalty claim waved away by referee Brett Hugo, after the Olyroo captain was knocked over inside the box.

Peter Tsekenis opened the scoring for Olympic in the 77th minute, powering home a header from a corner by substitute Gabriel Mendez.

Olympic had barely finished celebrating when Young equalised for Wollongong straight after the restart. Anthony Surjan's quick cross from the right eluded Chipperfield but found Young lurking at the far post, and the Englishman stroked the ball into the net.

Neither side really looked like scoring after that, although Peter Zorbas' 20 metre shot gave Pogliacomi a brief scare. After ninety minutes of evenly matched toil, the 1-1 scoreline seemed a fair result.

Ante Juric: a man of the match performance from the elegant defender who likes to attack.



Scott Thomas: the powerful Olympic midfielder policed dangerman Chipperfield.

"Tonight the players showed that they were genuine men," said proud Wollongong coach Nick Theodorakopoulos.

He praised the contribution made by Stuart Young, calling him "excellent... an old-style English striker. Playing three up front (Masi, Chipperfield, Young) was a risk that paid off tonight".

Olympic coach Branko Culina stated: "we got what we expected from Wollongong. This was always going to be a tough one. The conditions evened the game up a bit".

He blamed the Wolves goal on a lapse in concentration by Olympic. "Four or five touches after the kick off, they scored. Good teams have to learn to stop that."

Next month former Liverpool superstar Ian Rush will play two games for Sydney Olympic. Should be very exciting.

Olympic Youth hit Wollongong for five

By Ben Cubby

Sydney Olympic Youth team romped to a 5-0 victory over Wollongong Wolves Youth team at Belmore Sportsground on Sunday afternoon.

Both sides mixed a number of first graders with their youth team, resulting in a match of high quality. Olympic were rarely threatened by the Wolves outfit, although they didn't start hitting their straps until the torrential rain ceased towards the end of the first half.

Whippet-like wingback Lee Miot harassed Wollongong down the left flank, and he set up Norm Tome for a couple of cracking shots early on. Useful Olympic forward Steve Papadopoulos also came close for the home side, but his drive was well blocked by Danny Beltrame in the Wolves goal.

Lee Miot: the whippet-like Olympic Youth player destined for success in the future.

The Wollongong 'keeper, dropped from the first team after conceding four against Olympic last week, was beaten in the 40th minute when substitute Chris Seitis gave Beltrame no chance, heading home from Miot's cross.

Chad Bishop almost pulled one back for Wollongong, but John Karoubas was able to tip his powerful shot just wide. Steve Markvoski and Steve Dimitrievski provided some bite for the Wolves, although they couldn't penetrate the Olympic backline, marshalled by Chris Zoricich.

The nippy Seitis scored his second after 76 minutes. He skipped past a defender, evaded Beltame's lunge and sent a shot rolling in off the post. Tome made it four a minute later, before Pisano banged in another header for a final score of 5-0.

Best for Olympic were Miot, Pisano and Anthony D'Apuzzo, while for Wollongong Dimitrievski, Bishop and Chris Velovski never gave up.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC YOUTH:
Karoubas, S. Biviano, D'Apuzzo, Pisano (Bariamis 86), Nizam (Diles 80), Nicholau, Papadopoulos (Seitis 54), Tome, Sinozic, Zoricich, Miot.

WOLLONGONG YOUTH: Beltrame, Velovski, Dimech, Dimitrievski, Rodriguez (Lucas 77), Markovski, Southall (Lempriere 78), Ashley, Delis (Nicholson 54), Dimoski, Bishop.

Franken shows why he still rated best in Australia

PERTH GLORY 0
ADELAIDE FORCE 0

Sunday afternoon at Perth Oval, Perth. Crowd 13, 365

MATCH STATS

PERTH GLORY
Franken,Trajkovski,Harnwell,Naven,Miller, Halpin(Carbone 58),Edwards(Thorpe 85),Despotovski,Edgar,Boutsianis,Ergic. Sub not used Valle

FORCE
Knezevic,Zelic,Tobin,Mori,Veart,Vidmar,Day(Kemp83),Cartwright,Costanzo,Hassel, Kim. Sub not used Fusco

Yellows:
Glory: Miller 77
Force: Vidmar 35 Day 45 Veart 63

Best Players
3 FRANKEN PG
2 Mori AF
1 Naven PG

Referee: Eddie Lennie

By Jack Warner

Conditions were once again perfect for football here at Perth Oval and this confrontation usually produces some exciting matches. Glory are still unbeaten this season and Adelaide had got their first win on the board the week before.

The two sides had met twice already in pre-season friendlies; Glory winning both games 4-1 and 1-0 but this time 3 points were at stake.

The game kicked off an hour earlier than the usual time at Perth Oval due to the ABC screening the game live and the officials - looking very bright in their canary yellow shirts - had to wait for the nod from the TV staff before the game could commence.

Adelaide Force started the game the brighter of the two sides and in the fourth minute.

Ergic gave away a free-kick and the always dangerous Mori stepped up but much to the amusement of the smaller than usual Perth crowd put his shot way over the Glory crossbar.

Perth's Tony Franken in goal gave little idea of the impact he was to have on this game as his first few defensive clearances were all poor kicks and he was lucky to get away with them.

In the sixth minute Adelaide had what proved to be their best chance of the match, Vidmar made a diagonal run through midfield and chipped the ball over to the right wing and Brad Hassell, in turn centred the ball and from point blank range the Glory 'keeper made a truly superb one armed reflex save from Damien Mori, with Edgar clearing the danger.

The first 10 minutes was all Adelaide possession and they were using the flanks to great effect.

The crowds expectations rose when in the 13th minute Glory won a free-kick and the specialist for these situations, Boutsianis, lined up his shot but screwed it wide of the goal.

Damien Mori danced through the Glory defenders surrounding him on the quarter hour mark but his route to goal was eventually, if untidily, dealt with and the ball kicked to safety.

The half seemed to deteriorate from here and it was becoming a real midfield tussle and, although the home side were now slowly getting on top, they were struggling to break down the packed Adelaide penalty area, giving the impression that the Soth Australian side had come here for at least a point.

Glory's problem seemed to be a lack of movement up front with the strikers very static when off the ball.

Mori again endured the jeers of the parochial home crowd after he gathered a long ball, turned and skied the ball over the bar and into the watching fans behind the goal.

The first corner arrived in the 22nd minute and it went to Adelaide but it was dealt with easily by the Glory defence.

It was now the visitors time to be devoid of ideas and for the rest of the half they relied heavily on the long ball game, content to boot the ball forward for the speedy Mori to chase, the much improved Glory defence coping capably with this tactic.

Aurelio Vidmar found himself in referee Lennie's notebook when he grabbed the ball on the ground during a promising Glory attack, presumably to give his teammates a chance to regroup at the back.

The game was in desperate need of a goal with both teams guilty of misplaced passes and lack of vision.

It looked like Nathan Day was going to break the deadlock just before half-time but once again Franken made a great save to deny the Adelaide player a goal.

The Glory 'keeper was again in action a minute or so later when a searing Mori run down the left wing ended with the Force strikers sending over a low cross which Franken saved well at the feet of the advancing Force strikers.

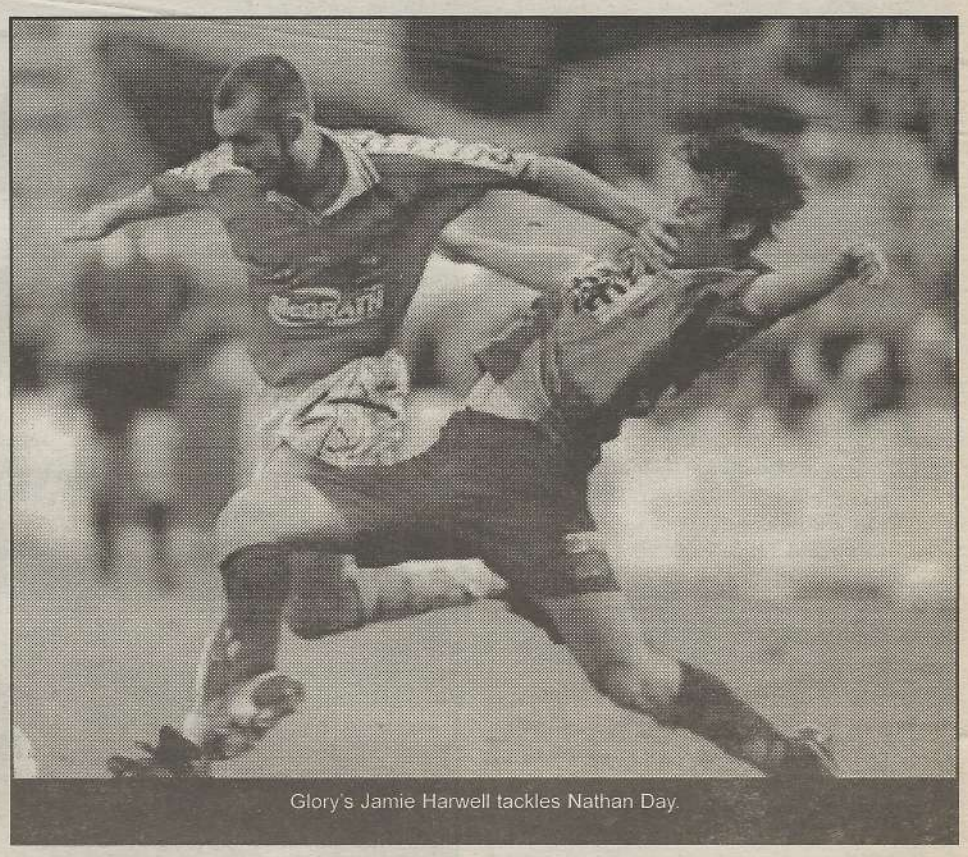
The half finished with Glory on the attack, Edgar crossed the ball from the right wing and the ball landed perfectly at Bobby Despotovski's feet but with the goal seemingly at his mercy the Perth number 10 missed his shot completely, swinging, instead, at the air.

The teams going in at the break then with the score 0-0 and the crowd being treated to a tug-of-war competition from teams from the different grandstands which to be quite honest was more entertaining than the fare served up in the first 45 minutes!

The second half however did start more promisingly and this time it was the Perth side who looked the more enterprising, no doubt their coach giving a few choice half-time words to his charges.

Apart from a couple of wasted free-kick chances which fell to Perth Glory, the game once more lapsed into its first half pattern with both teams cancelling each others forays forward in the midfield.

Bernd Stange was forced to bring on the young John Carbone for the ineffective Troy Halpin in the 58th minute in an attempt to inject something extra into his team.


Glory's Jamie Harwell tackles Nathan Day.

Three minutes later the Brazilian, Edgar Junior, made a promising run but with plenty of teammates in support decided to go it alone and to his disgust shot well over the Adelaide goal.

Passes from both sides were still going astray but after a variation in their long ball tactic, 'keeper Knezevic kicking the ball into his opposite penalty area and Mori losing out to Franken for the ball, the away side started to look more inventive.

It was the Perth substitute Carbone who missed a golden chance when in the 69th minute Boutsianis had a pot-shot at goal, the ball ricocheted off a defender and the Perth youngster shot over the bar.

In a game like this such chances have to be put away.

With 15 minutes to go Franken once more made a man of the match winning have when with Mori bearing down on him the Perth 'keeper raced to the edge of his area to meet him and saved well in a one-on-one situation to yet again deny the Adelaide striker.

The last 10 minutes saw a substitute coming on for both teams and Glory making the better swap introducing the tall Hamilton Thorpe, he immediately made an impact with Rob Trajkovski picking him out twice with accurate crosses and, although he got his head to them, he couldn't find the target.

His second effort though did graze the outside of the post in the 90th minute.

In injury time Glory won a corner but Knezevic in the Force goal tipped over the ball from a wicked inswinger from Trajkovski, the second corner was taken, cleared and Eddie Lennie called a halt to proceedings.

Bernd Stange's comments after the game were that "a draw at home is never enough, a win is still very important," but his team once again showed attitude and fight and he was pleased with the defence.

"We were very nervous in the first 10-12 minutes, but then we got more confident but our attackers just couldn't find the target," he said.

"It is important to play games to nil as everyone has been talikng about our defence, but more aggression is needed in our attack now."

He realised that in the last 15 minutes they coudn't beat the Adelaide defence and he decided rather than take risks up front he would settle for the draw.

"The players are very quiet in the dressing-room" he said, "they are very disappointed with themselves."

However he would be taking the same squad to Canberra for Friday night's game with the inclusion of the fit-again Vas Kalogeracos.

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Ram INSIDE JUNIOR SOCCER

POWER REMAIN UNBEATEN

Parramatta Power 4
Olympic Academy 0

Paul Goodwin reports that the inclusion of senior players in both teams allowed some very good football to be played in the game between the Parramatta Power Youth and the Sydney Olympic Academy teams on Friday night.

Unusually, the Academy included such players as Norman Tome, Adrian Cervinski, John Kyriazopoulos and Sebastian Sinozic.

Power, meanwhile, had David Barrett in their side, along with the speedy Danny Townsend and Lachlan Campbell.

Townsend ran onto a through pass in the 24th minute and outsprinted the defence before finishing clinically for a Power lead and then in the 36th Barrett also ran onto a similar pass, this time from deep, to race into the box and bury his shot past Glenn Wheatley.

Tome almost got one for Olympic early in the second half, but their defender Vedran Jaganjac could only turn a shot from Campbell into his own net in the 68th and finally in the 84th Townsend scored his second, after cutting in from the left and netting from an awkward angle.

Teams:

PARRAMATTA: Smith, Barrett, Kelso, Dixon, Gatt, Townsend, Campbell, Wright, Thompson, Cabera (Bardsley 70), Down

OLYMPIC ACADEMY: Wheatley, Jaganjac, Mascarello (Sabuncuoglu 46), Sinozic, Kyriaszopoulos (Tirovsi 5), Tome, Caravello, Pizanis, Cervinski, Chilvers, Agic

Roy Hay reports that the Southern Division of the National Youth League kicked off with eleven teams taking part in 1999-2000.

Newcomers this season are South Dandenong, Fawkner Blues, Preston Lions and Melbourne Knights Academy.

Melbourne Knights beat Albury Wodonga by eight goals to two at Knights Stadium, though this was scheduled to be a home game for the borderers.

In brilliant sunshine, the Knights struck first when Zlatko Maglic completed a good build-up down the left with a lob over keeper William Flood which just dropped under the bar.

That was in the sixth minute, but Albury Wodonga hit back with a strike by Michael Binney which stunned the home team. This goal in the 20th minute began a thirteen minute spell in which four more goals were added. Albury Wodonga gave the ball away in midfield and Carmelo Impiombato put Anthony Pelikan clear for a simple finish for the Knights.

Then David Martin skinned his man and fired a shot over Dale Barbuto to put Albury Wodonga level again. Michael Reda set up a second goal for Pelikan and when John Didulica's shot was blocked Impiombato made it four-two for the Knights.

Five minutes later Jasmin Sehic's cross from the right was finished off by Impiombato at the second attempt. The Knights's sixth goal eight minutes into the second half was the best of the lot.

Michael Reda played a reverse pass to Didulica who hit it first time wide to the right where Pelikan struck an unstoppable volley from 20 metres. Substitute Josip Loncaric slid in to convert a cross by another substitute Marin Kolceg, then Didulica limped off with a recurrence of his leg injury leaving the Knights with ten men as Chris Tabak came on at the break.

Loncaric completed the scoring from the penalty spot in 72 minutes. Albury Wodonga showed a lot of effervescent attacking play throughout and Kelvin Davies and Carl Mills played very well.

The Victorian Institute of Sport had a narrow one-nil win over the Melbourne Knights Academy at Knights Stadium in the second game of the double header.

The young Knights held their opponents goal-less in the first half with sweeper Frank Dumic outstanding and Brandon Vassallo revelling in the chance to on take his old colleagues from the VIS in midfield.

The breakthrough came six minutes into the second half when Ricky Chillico struck for the VIS. David Terek headed a cross down into the path of Chillico, who kept cool as keeper Matthew McCarthy spread himself, then chipped the ball into the net.

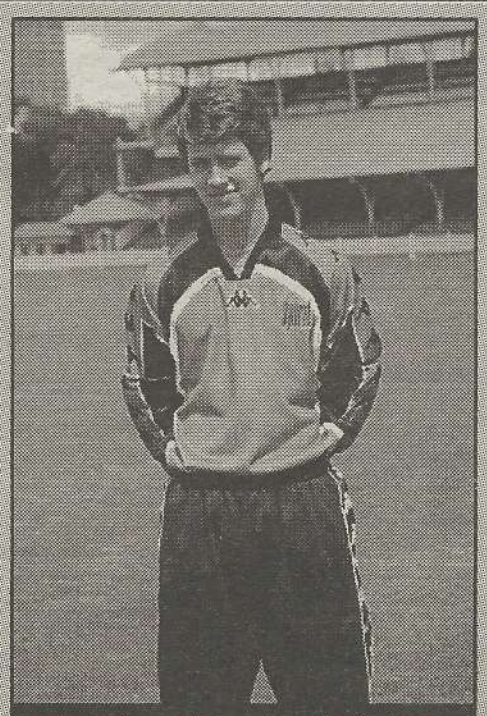
The VIS then sat back hoping to hit the Knights on the break, but as coach Ernie Merrick said afterwards, 'the breaks did not come'. The superior fitness of the VIS told in the end, but Zeljko Gagula will be pleased with the showing of his young Academy team on its first competitive outing.

Newcomers South Dandenong and Fawkner Blues drew one-all at Andrews Reserve on Friday night. Frank Tramontano scored for Fawkner and Menzo Memeti equalised for South Dandenong.

Bulleen Inter Kings upset South Melbourne with a one-nil win at Bob Jane Stadium.

Last year's Premier Carlton got off to a flying start in defence of its title with a five-nil win over Preston Lions. Former VIS striker Angelo Motsiopoulos scored late in the first half, then Colin Azzopardi headed home after a corner kick just after the interval. Thereafter Carlton ran in three more goals through Motsiopoulos again, Nick Tolios and Ace Stojcevski.

JOEYS IN TWO VICTORIES



Australian goalkeeper Jess Van Strattan

A bagful of doubles saw the Australian Under-17 soccer team wind up its Uruguayan leg of the South American Tour with a 7-0 win over club side Nacional in Montevideo today.

After a disappointing and controversial loss to the Uruguayan Under-17s three days earlier, the LG Joeys totally dominated the opposition as they continue to prepare for the World Youth Championship in New Zealand next month.

Captain Mark Byrnes started the scoring spree in the 16th minute, volleying in a cross from Iain Fyfe,

Anthony Doumanis was upended in the penalty area 19 minutes into the game after a great solo run, with Joe di Iorio converting from the spot, to make it 2-0.

Scott McDonald headed in a cross from Louis Brain in the 22nd to make it 3-0, di Iorio put his second on the board in the 35th minute, and it was 5-nil at half time with another goal to Byrnes in the 41st minute.

Substitute Joshua Kennedy replaced Mcdonald in the 55th minute and made an immediate impact on the game, scoring the final two goals in the 58th and 60th minutes, to wrap up proceedings for the Australians.

"The boys still have a very long task ahead of them, but after 2 hard games in the first few days against the Uruguay Under-17s, they've come through better than we thought." said coach LesE Scheinflug.

"While today's opposition was not as strong as our previous two games, it showed that the boys are starting to find their feet, and they are combining a lot better.

"We are working on the overall fitness, cohesion and tactical understanding of the team, and with 6 matches to go before we head to New Zealand, I can experiment a little more, but I'm quite pleased with today's performance, especially with the defenders - Mark Byrnes was outstanding and Joe Di Iorio is on fire so it's a good start."

LG JOEYS 7 (M Byrnes 16', 41', J Di Orio 19', 35', S McDonald 22', J Kennedy 58', 60')

NACIONAL 0

AUSTRALIAN LINE-UP:

Matthew Milosevic (gk); Shane Lockhart, Mark Byrnes, Aaron Goulding (Jade North 45'), Iain Fyfe, Lucas Pantelis, Louis Brain, James Johnson, Anthony Doumanis (Wayne Srhoj 50'), Scott McDonald (Joshua Kennedy 55'), Joe Di Iorio

In the first game of the Chilean tour the Australian team had a tough 4-2 win over Chilean 1st Division side Colo Colo in Santiago, to continue its good run on the current tour of South American.

LG JOEYS captain Mark Byrnes continued his fine form in front of goal, latching onto a free kick from Joe di Iorio to head the ball in for a 1-nil lead in just the fourth minute.

Colo Colo pulled back the equaliser in the 13th minute and took the lead in the 26th minute, holding onto a 2-1 lead into the half-time break.

Australia was back on even footing just 12 minutes into the second half though, Scott McDonald equalising in the 57th minute from a Jade North free kick, with di Iorio putting the LG Joeys ahead again in the 66th minute.

McDonald picked up his second and Australia's fourth in the 71st minute, the LG Joeys running out 4-2 winners.

LG JOEYS 4 (M Byrnes 4', S McDonald 57' 71', J Di Iorio 86')

Colo Colo 2

AUSTRALIAN LINE-UP:

Matthew Milosevic (gk)(Jess Van Strattan 45') (gk); Shane Lockhart, Mark Byrnes, Aaron Goulding (James Johnson 45'), Jade North, Lucas Pantelis, Louis Brain, Wayne Srhoj, Iain Fyfe, Joe Di Iorio (Joshua Kennedy 67'), Scott McDonald.

NORTHERN DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
A.I.S.	4	4	0	0	20	1	12	19
Parramatta Power	4	4	0	0	17	0	12	17
Q.A.S	3	2	1	0	14	3	7	11
Northern Spirit	3	2	1	0	5	3	7	2
Sydney Olympic	2	2	0	0	6	0	6	6
Wollongong Wolves	4	2	0	2	3	6	6	-3
Northern Spirit Colts	3	1	1	1	4	2	4	2
N.S.W.I.S.	2	1	1	0	2	1	4	1
A.C.T.A.S	3	1	1	1	5	9	4	-4
Newcastle Breakers	4	1	0	3	1	3	3	-2
Sydney United Colts	4	2	0	3	3	7	3	-4
Marconi Stallions	2	2	0	1	2	6	3	-4
Syd Olympic Acad	3	1	0	2	7	13	3	-4
Newcastle Colts	4	0	0	4	3	11	0	-8
Marconi Colts	2	0	0	2	0	8	0	-8
Sydney United	2	0	1	1	0	9	0	-9
Wollongong Colts	3	0	0	3	2	12	0	-10

NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS

Parramatta Power 4 — **Olympic Academy 0**
Townsend 24, 83
Barrett 36, own goal 67

Newcastle Breakers 1 — **Spirit Colts 0**
Wieczorek 71

Wollongong Colts 0 — **Sydney Utd Colts 4**
Clowes 14, Gelevski 16, 57
Mrdjan 79

N.S.W.I.S. 1 — **Northern Spirit 1**
Martin 81 — Monie 21

Breakers Colts 0 — **A.I.S 2**
Demourtzidis 13, Last 55

Sydney Olympic 5 — **Wollongong Wolves 0**
Pisano 10, 79, Seitis 55,68
Tome 73

Sydney United v Marconi Stallions Postponed

Marconi Colts v Olympic Academy Postponed

SOUTHERN DIVISION RESULTS

South Dandenong 1 — **Fawkner Blues 1**
Menzo Memeti — Frank Tramontano

Albury Wodonga 2 — **Melbourne Knights 8**
Binney, Martin — Pelikan 3, Impiombato 2, Loncaric 2, Maglic

Knights Academy 0 — **VIS 1**
Chillico

South Melbourne 0 — **Bulleen Inter 1**

Carlton 5 — **Preston Lions 0**
Motsiopoulos 2, Stojcevski, Azzopardi, Tolios

YOUNG AUSSIE SETTLES WELL AT ROYAL ANTWERP

By Aidan Ormond

One name to look out for in the first Young Socceroo squad of the new millennium is Graeme O'Donell. The former Marconi Colts player has just signed professional terms with Royal Antwerp in Belgium.

After trialling in March of this year the young Sydney defender was invited back a couple of months later. His club Marconi then sold him in a deal linked to performance with a sell-one percentage. He has been in Belgium since August 8.

O'Donell, 17, a relative of former NSL and S-League Aussie Scott O'Donell, made it to Belgium with the help of his family's connections with Socceroo keeper Mark Schwarzer, who saw the teenager play.

"Through Mark Schwarzer's agent we were able to organise the trial with Royal Antwerp," said O'Donell. "They are a club that were highly recommended because of their policy of youth development and also because of their affiliations with Manchester United."

Considering O'Donell has an Australian passport and has yet to play first team football anywhere, this signing indicates that he must have been particularly impressive to Royal Antwerp's eye.

The young Aussie is currently playing in the reserves but also gets to train with the first team twice a week.

"I think Belgium and Holland are good starting points to the bigger leagues," said his father Graeme snr.

"He is a very level-headed person, who is mature beyond his years. He left school to pursue his dreams and he is very single-minded about achieving his goals."

The former Southern Districts junior is now living in his own flat in Antwerp on his own. Quite a step for a 17-year-old in a foreign country (he is slowly learning the language).

His mother says she has noticed a difference in him since he has arrived in Belgium.

Returning last week after a brief visit she said she felt he had matured both on and off the field.

While some argue that this age is too young to be playing overseas - Robbie Slater's lonely experiences at his first Euro club Anderlecht were documented in the Spirit player's autobiography - O'Donell appears to be revelling in his new found independence.

"The first thing I noticed when I arrived was the one-touch nature of the game here in Belgium. At first I felt like a fish out of water but I am getting used to things now, I know some of the locals and I am settling in well," said the stocky young stopper who wears the number 13 shirt for his new club.

O'Donell will be back in Australia for a brief winter break over Christmas.

Graeme O'Donell: the 17-year-old is in the throes of a professional football life at Royal Antwerp.

Jack Sobczyk: ROOTY HILL RSL TO SPIRIT FC

By Ben Cubby

Jack Sobczyk - not a name you'd easily forget. And people are starting to notice the young man behind the name, as this Northern Spirit defender's star begins to rise.

Jack (or Jacek, to give him his proper name) typifies the new breed of NSL player. At twenty years of age, he combines work, study and full-time training with the Spirit squad.

This busy schedule reflects his solid work ethic and determination to succeed.

"Soccer is a big part of my life", he says, "but whatever I do, I try to do my best at. If something is worth doing, it's worth doing well".

A well-worn maxim, perhaps, but this level-headed approach has already brought him a long way from the Rooty Hill Under 9's, where he started out.

"In the Under 13's I moved to Blacktown City in the Super Youth League," says the Spirit defender.

"We had a great side, coached by Leo Carle."

A check through Inside Soccer's musty archives substantiates this claim - Sobczyk's young team-mates included Luke Tomich (Newcastle), Nick Carle (Olympic), Leo Carle (Wollongong), Tony Faria and Anthony Kanaan (both Spirit).

"Our rivals in the Under 14's were Parramatta Eagles. They had about ten players from the state team, including Danny Watkins (Cosmos), Rob Angievski (Newcastle) and Tony Panzarino (Eagles, formerly of Strasbourg, France).

"We ended up beating them 4-0 in the grand final that year".

Sobzcyk quickly advanced to the Blacktown first grade squad, making his State League debut at age 16. The next three years were spent juggling school commitments and soccer balls.

"When the Northern Spirit trials started, I thought I was going to go to Olympic instead, so I missed the first session", he recalls.

"The next morning Gary Van Egmond (Spirit's youth coach) came round to my house asking 'where were you last night?'.

"They had about 350 kids at the Spirit trials and about 12 ended up getting chosen. It was very intense, with a lot of running. I thought I was really fit at State League level, but I came to Gary's trial and lost another four kilos.

"He ran us like animals. We must have been the fittest team in the Youth League last year - we got away with a lot of 1-0 and 2-0 wins."

His debut in the senior side came near the end of last season, in front of 17,000 fans at North Sydney Oval.

"That first game was intense. I couldn't speak to a guy standing five metres away - it was that loud. The crowd puts pressure on you, but it's exciting.

"I get a bit nervous when we're singing the national anthem at the start and then settle down and focus on the way I play."

When quizzed about Spirit coach Graham Arnold, Sobczyk carefully replies "he's fairly professional. A lot of people find him intimidating, everyone wants to please him.

"People like to have friendly coaches, but I think there has to be someone with authority.

"The training we do varies each week. There are usually two sessions on Monday and one on the other days.

"It is generally more physical at the start of the week, building up to formations and short games at the end.

Jack Sobczyk: a Spirit star of the future.

This year I've improved a lot with the constant training. I learn from the experienced players and try to take a little bit from each player".

Currently the youngster is studying at Macquarie University, and also working as an accountant in the North Sydney CBD: "a short stroll to training."

Football is the priority at the moment as he battles to cement a place in the first eleven at Spirit Park.

"Anyway", he points out, "if I wasn't on the pitch I'd probably be watching from the stands"

Rest assured, this accountant won't just be making up the numbers.

Alex Petrou: the next Farina?

By Nick Lenders

Fifteen year old Alex Petrou is carrying on the success of Frank Farina's old school, St Augustine College, Cairns, by helping his team to overall third in the 1999 Bill Turner Cup, a school's knockout competition.

Petrou, an all-round talent, told Inside Soccer: "I play a lot of positions, but my favourite is midfield."

He featured prominently in his school's success and was awarded the Austcraft Medal as the Star Player of the tournament.

His recollections of the tournament were wholly positive.

"It was a great experience...it's a really competitive game; quick, fast and a lot of top players are involved."

Since this tournament, Petrou has lifted the intensity of his training, for he is determined to reach the elite level.

He goes to the gym three times week and spends 10-12 hours on soccer.

Speaking of his determination and dedication his mother noted:

"He is extremely dedicated, that (soccer) is his life, and it has been since he was seven.

"In the future I would like to see him play for the Socceroos, it's always been his ambition to play for Australia," she added.

Alex Petrou receiving his award from Bill Turner after the Bill Turner Cup game in Newcastle. The Queenslanders finished third.

Petrou, whose hero is Frank Farina, is very busy with soccer.

He plays in the local senior competition with Stratford on weekends, and believes this has lifted his skill level tremendously.

He was also recently involved in three Grand Finals for his team; his colts team lost in their final 2-1 and he was also included in both the reserve and senior teams who played Mareeba in their Grand Final.

He hopes to pursue a career in soccer once he's finished school, preferably in England or Italy, but says hew would be more than happy to play in the NSL.

Remember the name: Alex Petrou from Queensland.

Matildas get another crack at China

Anissa Tann-Darby gives her assessment of the Matildas' China tour squad.

By Anissa Tann-Darby

The Matildas have accepted a two match invitation to tour China. World Cup runners up China have offered the Australian team the opportunity to play two matches in Zhuhai and Xiamen. Although this invitation was only extended 11 days ago, the Australian players and officials jumped at the chance to play games against such quality opposition.

After the poor performance of the Matilda's at the recent Women's World Cup in the United States a number of changes have occurred. Chris Tanzey was appointed as the new National Coach and along with his appointment a new squad was selected on September 1.

This tour is now the first opportunity to see how the new squad and structure has improved.

A number of new faces were selected in the post World cup squad along with a number of players outside the squad who have been selected for this particular tour.

Tanzey believes that the tour will be an opportunity to experiment with some of these new players and see if they are able to make the transition from National League to the National team.

A number of key players are unavailable for this unexpected tour, most noticeably Captain and potent striker, Julie Murray.

Julie was recently offered the opportunity to play in a professional League in the United States along with World Cup veteran Sarah Cooper. A number of other World Cup members are also unable to travel due to injury, including Joanne Peters, Dianne Alagich, Amy Taylor.

Chris Tanzey has also selected in the squad three new players who have been performing exceptionally well over the past season.

These include sixteen year old Heather Garriock , South Australian Leanne Trimboli and Danielle Small who is currently completing her studies in America.

Goalkeeper Leanne Trimboli (23) has been having an outstanding season in goals for the SASI Pirates.

Both keepers for the tour have come from this team and with inspirational captain Sharon Black also missing , they will find it hard to maintain second spot in the current Ansett Summer Series.

Matilda custodian Tracey Wheeler.

A number of players are making a return to the team after lengthy absences, including leading Matilda's striker Sunni Hughes,whose goalscoring touch was greatly missed in the recent World Cup.

Bryony Duus is also returning after recovering from a knee injury which saw her unable to attend the World Cup.

Sacha Wainwright and Katrina Boyd have both been missing from the Matildas for the past two years and are looking once again to cement their places in the Olympic 2000 squad.

Kelly Golebiowski ... the teenage tyro is off to China with the Matildas.

Australia have only beaten the Chinese once in 1997 in Canberra and are looking once again to prove that that result can be replicated.

All squad members are performing exceptionally well and under the guidance of the new coach believe that they can once again achieve great things leading up to the 2000 Olympics.

Although the new squad has only been together for the last eight weeks the confidence and recent performances at both training and in trial games has shown that the new Matildas will be a force to be reckoned with on the international stage.

Heather Garriock, the 16-year-old prodigy from NSW was understandably delighted to be given the opportunity to show new national coach Chris Tanzey what she can do at international level, reports Aidan Ormond.

Garriock rates the Chinese as the best in the world, despite the US being World Champions.

"I reckon the way the Chinese play - the triangles and all - and the way they knock the ball around makes them the best side in the world."

For Garriock, the WSL player of the year, just getting on the park for this trip. will be enough. "Five minutes will do! Obviously I hope I play for more but I know I am not going to be a starter."

Her goal is to play in the Matildas' Sydney 2000 campaign, but her selection itself was still a surprise. "Everything has happened so quickly. I was stoked to be named in the squad, I've been playing very well."

With some star players' absence this tour gives the opportunity for the next generation to stake its claim. And the Chinese will give them a thorough workout.

THU 28 OCTOBER CHINA V AUSTRALIA 7.30PM (9.30PM AEST)
SUN 31 OCTOBER CHINA V AUSTRALIA 3.30PM (6.30PM AEST)

Australian Team for China Tour (coach Chris Tanzey pictured inset)

Name	State	Hometown	Position	DOB	Caps
Traci BARTLETT	ACT	Sydney	D	170/5/72	43
Sharon BLACK	SA	Adelaide	M	04/04/71	40
Katrina BOYD	NSW	Sydney	F	12/12/71	23
Bryony DUUS	QLD	Brisbane	M	07/10/77	13
Alicia FERGUSON	QLD	Brisbane	F	31/10/81	18
Alison FORMAN	NNSW	Newcastle	M	17/03/69	51
Heather GARRIOCK	NSW	Sydney	M	21/12/82	0
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI	NSW	Sydney	F	26/07/81	17
Peita-Claire HEPPERLIN	ACT	Canberra	M	24/12/81	6
Sunni HUGHES	NNSW	Newcastle	F	09/06/68	45
Cheryl SALISBURY	NNSW	Newcastle	D	08/03/74	51
Danielle SMALL	NNSW	Newcastle	M	07/02/79	0
Bridgette STARR	NSW	Newcastle	D	10/12/75	41
Anissa TANN-DARBY	NSW	Sydney	D	10/10/67	72
Leanne TRIMBOLI	SA	Adelaide	GK	10/11/75	0
Sacha WAINWRIGHT	ACT	Canberra	D	06/02/72	17
Tracey WHEELER	WA	Sydney	GK	26/09/67	36
Amy WILSON	ACT	Canberra	M	09/06/80	10

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES

SASI PIRATES 3 (Jessica Halfpenny 2, 93, Rebecca Morrison 54)
ACTAS CANBERRA ECLIPSE 0

QAS STING 3 (April Mann 10, Lisa Dunne 63, Olivia Hohnke 77) **VICTORIA VISION** 1 (Caroline Saville 76)

NSW SAPPHIRES 3 (Michelle Carney 21, 84, Alicia Cavanagh 89) **NORTHERN NSW PRIDE** 0

POINTS:

NSW SAPPHIRES	16
SASI Pirates	12
QAS Sting	8
NNSW Pride	8
ACTAS Eclipse	3
Victoria Vision	2

This weekend's games were played without the China-bound Matildas and proved to be a test of depth for each team.

Leaders NSW Sapphires continued their good form to record an easy 3-0 win over northern neighbours Pride.

The game was held in wet and muddy conditions with the Sapphires converting their opportunities better than their opponents.

Michelle Carney was the destroyer with two goals while midfielder Alicia Kavanagh scored the third goal.

The South Australian Sport Institute Pirates maintained their challenge to the Sapphires with an emphatic 3-0 win over ACTAS Eclipse with the goals coming from Jessica Halfpenny, with two, and Rebecca Morrison.

The QAS Sting was the other winner on the weekend and as they recorded a 3-0 win over bottom placed Victoria Vision.

The Sting's scoring was shared between April Mann, Lisa Dune and Olivia Hohkne each scoring one.

VLADO ZORIC ON THE STALLIONS

By Daniela Raco

Boasting a side that has been moulded on qualities such as skill, stamina and speed, the colourful cast at Bossley park are looking at making a telling contribution to their 19990/2000 season campaign.

A linchpin in their midfield, with uncanny vision, Vlado Zoric adds a dangerous dimension to Marconi's potent attack.

Having spent much of his career at the glamour club (five seasons), the Marconi stalwart gives us an insight into the make-up of the men that take to the park at Club Marconi.

Who is the funniest character in the game today?

Marcus Phillips - during his time at Marconi he was known to have cut the shoelaces of players at training.

If you could have box seats at any event in the world, what would it be?

Miss Universe.

When it comes to dress sense which team-mate is stuck in the 80s?

Paolo Marchesini - he likes the tight jeans and leather adidas sneaker look.

Which one of your team-mates is most successful with the ladies?

Christian Care.

Which member of Marconi's squad is most likely to be caught dancing on a podium at a nightclub.

Buddy Farah.

On interstate trips which team-mate do you refuse to share a room with? Why?

Francis Awaritefe, because he plays his instruments too loud and tries to sing.

Which member of the squad has the best set of wheels?

Vlado Zoric (Nissan 200BX), and Brad Maloney (Honda Prelude).

Which team-mate is the coach likely to invite home for a lamb roast?

Francis Awaritefe.

Who has the most unusual nickname in the team?

Brett Hughes - the 'Rattle Snake', because he resembles Stone Cold Steve Astin.

Which Marconi boy whips out the mirror and hair-spray for a last minute check of the hair before a game?

Chad Gibson, Christian Care, Danny Invincible, and Vlado Zoric.

Which team-mate is most likely to rise early on a Sunday for church?

Brendan Renaud.

Who would top Cleo's most eligible bachelor list?

Bugsy Malone.

Where would you rate?

Let someone else be the judge!

Would you trust any of your team-mates to hold your deepest secret?

Brendan, Chad, and Danny.

If you were to star in a Hollywood movie, who would be your leading lady?

Catherine Zeta-Jones.

What is the best (or perhaps worst) excuse you've heard someone use for missing training?

Francis - 'road works'.

Which team-mate is likely to walk past Hungry Jacks and feel compelled to walk in?

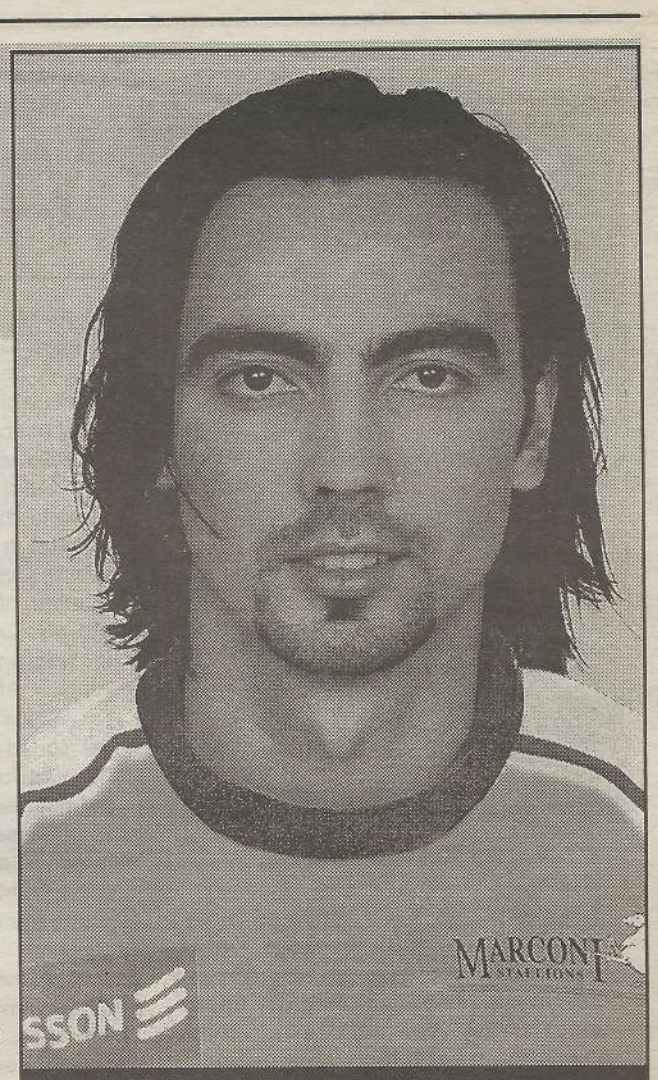
Christian Care.

If Marconi's Grand Final hopes relied on a penalty in injury time who would be calm under pressure and step up to the line to take it?

Pan-keun Kim, because he is cool, calm, and collected.

If you were to return home late one night and see three messages on your answering machine, one each from your mother, your girlfriend and your coach, Eddie Krncevic, each requesting that you return their call, who would you contact first - in order of importance?

1. Mum - family
2. Coach - business
3. Girlfriend - pleasure.



Vlado Zoric: spills the beans on his fellow Stallions.

Christian Care: the ladies man of the Stallions!

Paolo Marchesini: the Italian is apparently stuck in the eighties when it comes to fashion.

Stuart YOUNG

adding a new dimension to Wolves' attack

By Aidan Ormond

Last Sunday Wollongong Wolves paraded their new acquisition, striker Stuart Young. Last season Young, 26, was the Singapore S-league's Golden Boot award winner - he has nabbed 32 goals in the past two seasons in Singapore to head the scoring charts on the tiny Island. Young played for Home United and most recently Wellington Woodlands.

At Wellington he played under legendary coach R. Vengadasalam, otherwise known as 'Venga'. "Yeah, he's a legend, a real character," said Young fondly.

Playing in Singapore was the springboard for the Yorkshireman to come to Australia - a number of Aussies play there, including his current Wolves teammate David Cervinski.

Prior to his Asian adventure, he was an apprentice with Arsenal for three years, before moving on to Hull, Scarboro and Scunthorpe.

It was his manager at Scarboro, former Chelsea central defender Steve Wicks, who enticed him to travel to Singapore.

"He had been on at me for a while to go over there," said Young from his temporary accommodation in Figtree he shares with Wolves keeper Danny Beltrame.

"As a place to live Singapore is fantastic, a great all-round place. It's clean and well-organised. Yes it lacks a bit of personality but you can live with that when it's so safe."

The S-League has been running for four years, and it's steadily increasing in competitiveness. Although crowds ar lower than the NSL average (about 2-3,000), there is a strong media profile.

Interestingly, all stadiums are Singapore government owned.

Among the Eastern Europeans and the odd Brazilian is a fair smattering of Aussies like Tapai, Ithier, Jurilj (now at Sydney United), Durakovic (now at Falcons), Power's Blagojevic and Cervinski.

"One Aussie who has a huge respect is Darren Stewart. He's up for the player of the year award and is a real genuine guy to boot."

Beginning his Australian career Young is open about what he can achieve. "I am as new to Australia as Australia is to me. It was the same when I arrived in Singapore, I did not know too much, but all you do is given 100%, that's all you can do."

His wish to travel stems from his parents. "They are pretty well-educated people who emphasised the importance of broadening one's horizons. I like it, seeing different cultures."

And the little he has seen of the Wolves, and the NSL, he likes. "Wolves seem to have players with technique. They like to play good football ... they rarely hoof the ball forward from the back. Esala (Masi) looks useful and strong, while Saso (Petrovski) is a quality striker as well.

"I just watched the Kingz v South Melbourne game on Channel 7. It looks a lot faster and physical than Singapore ... I am looking forward to it, it's more like the UK."

As for the sort of striker he is, he describes himself as a typical Wolves player: "I like the ball on the deck, playing one-twos and working off the players around me."

Wolves now have Young, together with Saso Petrovski and Esala Masi in their front third.

The side that so enthralled us the season before last may well achieve that success again this campaign with such a potent strikeforce.

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Aussies Abroad Round Up

BOSNICH BACK IN FAVOUR

Mark Bosnich... back as number one for Manchester United

by John Vrtaric

Mark Bosnich is finally back in favour at Manchester United - and the first-choice 'keeper underlined why in the Champions Cup game against Marseille with a fine display.

But the Aussie was in no mood to talk about his own heroics after having his clean sheet soiled by a fantastic French strike midway through the second half.

Helpless to prevent a rasping 68th minute drive from roaming defender Gallas, Bosnich refused to absolve himself of blame as he had not seen it on the video. Well, he had no reason to be so modest - it was simply a stunning finish that none would have come near to thwarting.

After his third successive start for the Reds, Bosnich: "I don't know if I could have done better - I haven't seen the replay and until I do it's hard for me to judge."

He was equally subdued when it came to talking about his brilliant 30th-minute stop from Fabrizio Ravanelli or two other reflex saves that had allowed United to go in at the break goalless.

He said: "The defenders in front of me made my life easy out there. They were outstanding and played very well in very difficult conditions.

"I don't think people will probably realise just how bad the pitch was - it was like a pudding. Obviously we're disappointed with this result because, while it's great news that Croatia Zagreb lost, we knew to win here would have virtually sealed qualification."

Bosnich's performance earned him another full game in United's weekend 3-1 away loss to Tottenham.

In other Premier League games Mark Schwarzer, Harry Kewell and Richard Johnson played the full ninety minutes for their respective teams.

Kewell's Leeds United had an amazing 4-4 draw with Everton with the Aussie scoring a wonderful 35-yard lob in the 35th minute.

Kewell was also part of the Leeds side which played in Europe in the UEFA Cup in midweek action.

Meanwhile, Southampton are not pursuing their interest in the Australian keeper Jason Petkovic who has played a couple of trial games for the club, and he has already moved on to Charlton.

In the Nationwide Division One league a full around was played mid week with a number of Australians playing prominent roles.

John Filan was the goalkeeper in Blackburn's 1-1 home draw with Crystal Palace for whom neither of the injured Aussies, Craig Foster nor Nick Rizzo, were part of the squad.

In another game which had the potential to feature a number of Aussies, Manchester City had a 0-1 away win over Birmingham to go top of the first division. Birmingham's Aussie Stan Lazarides is still injured while for City Danny Allsop came on in the 90th minute but Danny Tiatto did not appear in the game.

Two Aussie 'keepers, Jason Kearton and Andy Petterson, both played full games with Kearton in the Crewe goal as they drew 2-2 with Bolton while Petterson played in Portsmouth's 5-1 win over Walsall.

Both Kevin Muscat and Steve Corica started the game for the Wolverhampton in their 1-0 away win over championship aspirants Fullham. Muscat played the full game while Corica was replaced in the 80th minute.

Andrew McDermott was part of West Bromwich Albion's 0-1 home loss to QPR and received a yellow card in the 35th minute.

In the weekend Nationwide Division One games McDermottt was in the West Brom team that had an away 0-0 draw with Charlton while Jason Van Blerk, again, remained on the bench for the whole game.

Crewe's 'keeper Kearton was again in goal in its 0-1 home loss to Barnsley.

Manchester City continued its surge towards the Premier League with a 2-0 home win over Blackburn for whom Filan was in goal - Tiatto remained on the bench for City while Allsop was not part of the squad.

Ned Zelic ... back in the Munchen first team

Shaun Murphy made his return from injury in the heart of Sheffield United's defence in their 2-2 away draw with Swindon.

In Wolverhampton's 2-2 home draw with Port Vale Muscat was replaced in the 80th minute but Corica remained on the reserves bench.

In the Nationwide Division Two Andrew Bernal was included in Reading's team that beat Bury 2-0 while Tim Cahill played in Milwall's 0-2 loss to Preston North End in the midweek games.

Cahill was also part of Milwall's 1-2 away win over Colchester on the weekend in which game Lucas Neill made his return from injury to play a full game.

Bernal was part of Reading's win by the same score at Oldham.

In Scotland Ralph Bove came on in the 82nd minute in Dundee United's 2-0 loss to Motherwell while Mark Viduka was on the field for the ninety minutes as Celtic had a last gap 2-1 win over St Johnstone in the weekend game.

Craig Moore and Tony Vidmar's team, Rangers, had the weekend off.

Moore was also part of Rangers 4-1 Champions Cup win over PSV.

In Croatia, Ante Milicic came on in the 63rd minute in Rijeka's 2-2 away draw with Slaven Belupo.

Josip Skoko played a full game but Tony Grdic was not part of Hajduk's 1-1 home derby draw with Croatia Zagreb.

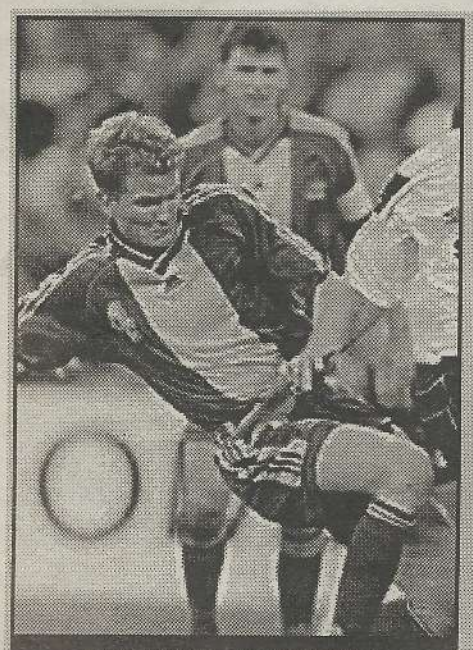
In Germany David Zdrilic came on in the 67th minute in Ulm's 1-0 home win over Unterhaching. Ned Zelic played the full ninety minutes in an unaccustomed right defensive role as 1860 Munchen drew 0-0 at home with Hamburg. Paul Agostino, for Munchen, and Josip Simunic, for Hamburg, came on in the 70th and 84th minute respectively in the same game.

Hamburg remains in second position behind Borussia Dortmund while Munchen is in a respectable seventh position and Ulm languishing in third last spot and in danger of being in the Bundesliga for only one season.

In Italy both Paul Okon and Ante Seric played full games for Fiorentina and Verona respectively. Okon's team was beaten 2-0 away to Piacenza while Seric's team had a 0-0 away draw. Okon's starting appearance coincided with the resignation of his coach Giovanni Trapattoni.

In Serie B, Marco Bresciano came on the 72nd minute in Empoli's 1-1 home draw with Pescara while Vince Grella was not included in the squad.

In Holland Zeljko Kalac played the full game for Roda JC as they went down 0-1 at



Hayden Foxe ... a dream game

Olyroo and Sanfrecce Hiroshima defender Hayden Foxe had one of "those" chances last week.

Foxe, and his Sanfrecce team-mate and LG Socceroo Tony Popovic were selected to play for the World Dreams against the Japan Dreams at Tokyo's National Stadium.

While Popovic played the entire game, Foxe was kept on for a full half, playing alongside none other than Serie-A pairing and cross town rivals, Robert Baggio of Internazionale, and Leonardo of AC Milan.

"They were both absolutely fantastic," enthused Foxe from Japan.

"They are superstars on and off the pitch, making an effort to have some time, and try and speak with everyone, and it was a real buzz.

"Unfortunately, I don't know very much Italian or Portuguese so we were limited to some hand signals and a bout of hellos but that was OK.

"Leonardo used to play for Antlers in the J League and was a crowd favourite when he was here, and of course Baggio is known world wide, so it brought a whole lot more attention to the game.

"I played 45 minutes and was a bit nervous when I first went out, but then I settled, and it was like playing with any other guys in any other game.

"You just wouldn't think you'd ever play a game with these two, so that was a great experience, and we ended up winning the match 3-1 so everyone was happy."

Meanwhile, Sky Sports reports that the return of Richard Johnson has pleased Watford assistant coach Luther Blissett who is predicting that the midfielder could help solve Watford's goalscoring problem.

"It's great to have Richard back," said the Blissett, "but he's got to work on his match fitness and get his sharpness back. He's worth an awful lot to us, he's a really important part of our squad.

"Midfield, especially in this division, is where you need your strong players, the ones who have real character, and Richard is one of those. The crowd recognise that and they get behind him when he is on the ball. That in turn comes through to the players and so everyone gets a lift."

Richard Johnson

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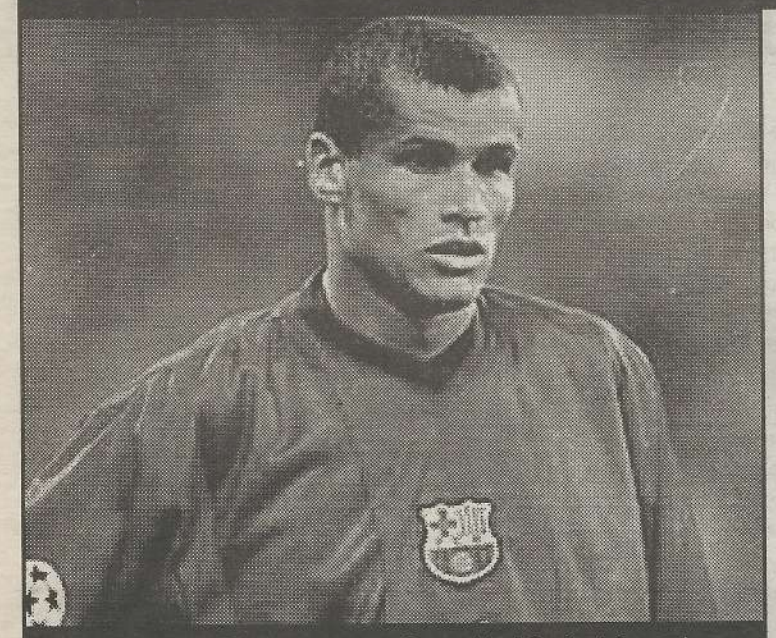
Champions Cup Round Up

ARSENAL STRUGGLING AFTER HOME THRASHING



Barcelona's Rivaldo ... scorer of a goal in 4-2 win at Arsenal

FC Barcelona reached the last 16 of the UEFA Champions League, S.S Lazio are almost sure of a qualifying also, but holders Manchester United FC were deprived of a record-equalling unbeaten run in the competition by Olympique de Marseille. United failed to match AFC Ajax's UEFA Champions League record of 18 unbeaten matches when they were beaten 1-0.

Barcelona kept up their unbeaten start to their campaign by beating United's FA Premiership rivals Arsenal FC 4-2 after two first-half goals within the space of a minute.

Lazio, the new Serie A leaders, cut a second-half swathe through NK Maribor to take command of Group A with 10 points. Yugoslav international Sinisa Mihajlovic opened the scoring in the 34th minute, but the Italians did not really click until the second half when Simone Inzaghi scored twice and Dejan Stankovic grabbed another goal. Germany's Bayer 04 Leverkusen stayed second in Lazio's group, with five points, despite a heavy 4-2 defeat to Dynamo Kyiv, who leapfrogged over Maribor to move off the bottom of the table. It was the Ukrainian side's first win in four matches and came after they twice squandered the lead.

Vitalii Kossovskyi gave Dynamo the lead four minutes after the start but Ulf Kirsten equalised in the 12th. Maksim Shatskikh put the home side back in front in the 36th only for Oliver Neuville to equalise again in the 49th. Olexander Holovko put Kiev back in front in the 61st and Vladyslav Vashchuk made it 4-2 a minute from time.

Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal, who helped AFC Ajax to set their record between 1994 and 1996, stunned Barca supporters when he dropped regular Dutch goalkeeper Ruud Hesp in favour of the inexperienced Francesc Arnau. Arnau had played just twice for the first team previously but the gamble paid off handsomely.

Brazilian striker Rivaldo provided a 15th-minute penalty and Luis Enrique added the second goal a minute later before Dennis Bergkamp narrowed the gap a minute before half time. Luis Figo then made it 3-1 in the 56th and Philip Cocu put the game beyond Arsenal's reach in the 70th. Marc Overmars scored a consolation goal in the 84th. The win left 1992 champions Barcelona with 10 points at the top of Group B while Arsenal were under pressure from a resurgent Fiorentina with both teams on five points.

AC Fiorentina took their first win in Group B. Argentine international Gabriel Batistuta sent them on their way to a 3-0 win in Florence against AIK Solna of Sweden, who have so far taken just one point from four matches.

The game was stopped for four minutes in the first half due to a partial floodlight failure before Enrico Chiesa made it 2-0 in the 36th and then Abel Balbo rounded it off in the 86th.

Norway's Rosenborg BK took the lead in Group C with a shock 3-0 defeat of Borussia Dortmund in Germany. Borussia had Lars Ricken sent off after 68 minutes. The result left Rosenborg on eight points, ahead of Dortmund on five. Dutch side Feyenoord have four points and Portugal's Boavista FC two after the two teams drew 1-1 with two late goals. It was the fourth successive match in which Feyenoord have surrendered the lead.

United were just 21 minutes away from equalling Ajax 's all-time record of 19 unbeaten matches in a row when William Gallas beat Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich and scored for the home side. The match ended 1-0 to Marseille, a result that put the French champions top of Group D and two points clear of the team that beat them 2-1 at Old Trafford last month. It was Bosnich's UEFA Champions League debut for United after he suffered an early season injury and then apparently fell out of favour with manager Alex Ferguson.

"We didn't match them and we deserved to be punished for it to be honest," said a disappointed Ferguson.

Austria's SK Sturm Graz scored their first goal and first points in group D in a shock 1-0 win at home to NK Croatia Zagreb.

Chelsea FC scored one of the most memorable results in their history when they crushed Galatasaray SK 5-0 in Istanbul and put themselves on the verge of qualifying for the Second Group-Match Stage of the UEFA Champions League. That win was the highlight of a goal-laden night of action, which saw 1997/98 champions Real Madrid CF stunned by FC Porto, 1993/94 winners Milan AC shocked by Hertha HSC Berlin, Molde FK come back from 2-0 down to win 3-2 and AC Sparta Praha oust still pointless Willem II in a seven-goal thriller. FC Girondins de Bordeaux joined FC Barcelona as the only team definitely through to the last 16 with an away win over Spartak Moscow in the first of the eight matches, which produced 31 goals.

In Group E, FC Porto completed a great double for Portugal over their Iberian neighbours when they beat Real Madrid CF 2-1 with two goals from Mario Jardel to virtually ensure their place in the last 16. Last week Portugal saw off a challenge from Spain to host the 2004 European Championships, and Porto avenged last month's 3-1 defeat to Real Madrid.

Porto have nine points, Real Madrid seven, Olympiakos Piraeus FC four and Molde FK three, but while Porto are virtually safe, they can still, mathematically, finish outside the top two positions. Any slight doubts could be erased next week when they play Norwegians Molde at home and Real face Olympiakos. Molde meanwhile came from 0-2 down to defeat Olympiakos 3-2 for their first win in the UEFA Champions League after three straight defeats. Olympiakos led 2-0 at half-time with goals from Dimitrios Mavrogenidis and Zlatko Zahovic, but Molde came storming back in the second half to win with two goals from Andreas Lund after 55 and 59 minutes and a third from Daniel Berg Hestad 16 minutes from time.

In Group F, Rangers FC completed their rise from bottom to top of the standings with a 4-1 demolition of Dutch side PSV Eindhoven, who were once coached by Rangers Dutch boss Dick Advocaat. It was another Dutchman who caused PSV's downfall with Rangers Dutch striker Michael Mols scoring two.

The result lifted Rangers on to seven points, one above Valencia CF and FC Bayern München who drew 1-1 in Spain. PSV are out of it with one point. If Rangers beat Valencia at home next week and Bayern fail to win at Eindhoven, Rangers will make sure of qualifying.

FC Girondins de Bordeaux of made sure of their place in the last 16. Bordeaux provided the appetiser to a feast of scoring around the continent which produced 31 goals when they won 2-1 at Spartak Moscow in an early kick-off to ensure they could not finish lower than the second qualifying place in Group G.

The other match in the same group produced a thrilling game in Tilburg as AC Sparta Praha, who looked dead and buried after conceding two goals in the first six minutes to Willem II, eventually won 4-3 to keep alive their chances of accompanying Bordeaux into the last 16. Willem II's Czech captain Tomás Galásek was sent off for tripping one of his compatriots in the Sparta side, and a penalty for that offence, scored by Vladimir Labant after 54 minutes, and another spot kick in the last minute from the same player, helped Sparta turn the match around.

Bordeaux have 10 points from their four matches, followed by Sparta on eight, Spartak Moscow on four and Willem II yet to gain a point after four straight defeats. Bordeaux play Sparta at home next week while Spartak Moscow play Willem II. Sparta Praha meet Spartak Moscow in what is likely to be the make-or-break game for both teams in Prague on 3 November.

Chelsea stunned the Galatasaray fans - proud of turning their Ali Sami Yen stadium into "a hell" for visiting teams - into open-mouthed astonishment with goals from Tore Andre Flo (2), Gianfranco Zola, Dennis Wise and Gabriele Ambrosetti lifting the London side into second place in Group H behind Hertha HSC Berlin.

Hertha continued on their unbeaten path with a 1-0 win over Milan AC in front of 75,000 home fans in the Olympiastadion to leave the group finely balanced with two matches to play. Hertha lead with eight points, followed by Chelsea on seven, Milan on five and Galatasaray on one. Next week Milan host Chelsea and Hertha are at home to Galatasaray, knowing a win will see them safely into the last 16.

Group A

Dynamo Kiev 4 - 2 **Bayer Leverkusen**
Kossovskyi (4), Shatskikh (36), Holovko (61), Vaschuk (89)
Kirsten (12), Neuville (49)

NK Maribor 0 - 4 **Lazio**
Chiesa (36), Stankovic (63), Inzaghi (50, 74)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S.S. Lazio	4	3	1	0	11	2	10
BayerLeverkusen	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Dynamo Kyiv	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
NK Maribor	4	1	0	3	1	10	3

Group B

Fiorentina 3 - 0 **AIK Solna**
Batistuta (5), Chiesa (36), Balbo (86)

Arsenal 2 - 4 **Barcelona**
Bergkamp (44), Overmars (84)
Rivaldo (pen 15), Luis Enrique (16), Luis Figo (55), Cocu (75)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Barcelona	4	3	1	0	11	6	10
AC Fiorentina	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Arsenal FC	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
AIK Solna	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

Group C

Borrusia Dortmund 0 - 3 **Rosenborg**
Sorensen (17, 58), Winsnes (70)

Feyenoord 1 - 1 **Boavista**
Tornasson (76), Timofte (pen

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg BK	4	2	2	0	10	4	8
Borussia Dortmund	4	1	2	1	6	7	5
Feyenoord	4	0	4	0	5	5	4
Boavista FC	4	0	2	2	3	8	2

Group D

Marseilles 1 - 0 **Manchester United**
William Gallas (69)

Sturm Graz 1 - 0 **Croatia Zagreb**
Kocijan (40)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olymp Marseille	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
Manchester United	4	2	1	1	5	2	7
NK Croatia Zagreb	4	1	1	2	4	3	4
SK Sturm Graz	4	1	0	3	1	8	3

Group E

Porto 2 - 1 **Real Madrid**
Jardel (13, 35), Peixe (o.g. 68)

Molde 3 - 2 **Olympiakos**
Lund (54, 59), Berg Hestad (74)
Mavrogenidis (36), Zahovic (41)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	4	3	0	1	6	4	9
Real Madrid CF	4	2	1	1	11	7	7
Olympiakos	4	1	1	2	8	9	4
Molde FK	4	1	0	3	5	10	3

Group F

Rangers 4 - 1 **PSV**
Amoruso (19), Mols (39, 80), McCann (56)
Nistelrooy (pen 45)

Valencia 1 - 1 **Bayern Munich**
Ilie (11), Effenburg (pen 18)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers FC	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Valencia CF	4	1	3	0	5	3	6
Bayern Munchen	4	1	3	0	5	4	6
PSV Eindhoven	4	0	1	3	3	8	1

Group G

Spartak Moscow 1 - 2 **Bordeaux**
Andrei Tikhonov (55 pen), Sylvain Wiltord (76)
Johan Micoud (23)

Willem II 3 - 4 **Sparta Prague**
Bombarda (1), Shoukov (6), Schenning (50)
Novotny (17), Labant (pens 54, 90), Baranet (62)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	4	3	1	0	7	4	10
AC Sparta Praha	4	2	2	0	9	4	8
Spartak Moscow	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
Willem II	4	0	0	4	6	14	0

Group H

Galatasaray 0 - 5 **Chelsea**
Flo (31, 48), Zola (53), Wise (78), Ambrosetti (87)

Hertha Berlin 1 - 0 **AC Milan**
Wosz (41)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hertha BSC Berlin	4	2	2	0	6	4	8
Chelsea FC	4	2	1	1	7	2	7
Milan AC	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Galatasaray SK	4	0	1	3	3	10	1

COMPILED BY INSIDE SOCCER

English League Round Up

KING KANU HAT-TRICK SINKS CHELSEA

Nwankwo Kanu scored a sensational hat-trick in the last 15 minutes as Arsenal came from 2-0 down to score an incredible 3-2 victory against title rivals Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Tore Andre Flo gave Chelsea the lead on 38 minutes and the Blues made it 2-0 when Graeme Le Saux swung a cross into the area from the touchline and Dan Petrescu rose unmarked to head home the second from six yards in the 52nd minute.

But Kanu pulled one back for the Gunners in the 75th minute, added a second on 83 and then completed the most remarkable of turn-arounds by netting a sensational winner in the second minute of stoppage time.

Picking up a ball on the left, he dribbled past Ed De Goey who was inexplicably out of his goal on the byline, and curled a precise shot over the head of Frank Leboeuf on the line.

Manchester United blew the chance to return to the top of the Premiership as they lost 3-1 to Tottenham at White Hart Lane.

Ryan Giggs put the visitors ahead on 23 minutes with a fine effort but Steffen Iversen squared the encounter with a close-range strike after a goalmouth melee.

Then David Ginola, giving the United defence a torrid time, whipped in a dangerous corner kick and Paul Scholes headed into his own net in the 40th minute.

United pressed hard for the equaliser but it was Spurs who came up with the moment of inspiration when fullback Steve Carr unleashed a stunning strike from 30 yards to wrap up the 3-1 victory.

Incredibly it was the first time United had taken the lead and lost in any competitive match since 1993.

Benito Carbone gave fans the first glimpses of his mercurial talents by setting up Dion Dublin's equaliser for Aston Villa in their 1-1 home draw against Wimbledon.

Carbone left two Wimbledon defenders in his wake before crossing from the left wing to set up Dublin for a far-post strike on 35 minutes.

Robbie Earle had earlier put Wimbledon in front on 26 minutes and that goal plus some heroics from goalkeeper Neil Sullivan helped Wimbledon take a valuable point.

Third from bottom Bradford scored a real coupon buster of a result as they defeated in-form Leicester 3-1 at Valley Parade.

Robbie Blake gave the Bantams a precious 1-0 lead in the 12th minute when he gathered a simple ball from midfield and out-paced Frank Sinclair to slot home from the edge of the penalty area.

But on 21 minutes Neil Lennon unleashed a ferocious shot which Gary Walsh could only parry and Andy Impey was on hand to bundle the ball over the line to make it 1-1.

Bradford, who had scored just two goals at home in the Premiership before Saturday, kept battling and went 2-1 up on 40 minutes through Lee Mills and they clinched the victory when Neil Redfearn scored his first for the club since his summer move.

Titi Camara rescued a point for Liverpool just as it seemed everything was going wrong for them against Southampton at the Dell.

Trailing 1-0 to a first-half goal from Trond Egil Soltvedt, Liverpool saw substitute Michael Owen limp off with a hamstring injury.

Having used all three substitutes that left them with just 10 men but with nine minutes left Camara fired home an equaliser.

Sheffield Wednesday missed a string of chances for the second week running as they stayed stranded at the bottom after a 0-0 home draw against Coventry.

Giles de Bilde started the trend by missing an early one-on-one and it continued for the rest of the match.

Coventry also had their chances with Moroccan Mustapha Hadji hitting the bar and Carlton Palmer missing a sitter near the end.

Leeds were denied a seventh consecutive Premiership victory after a last-minute goal by David Weir earned Everton a point in an amazing 4-4 draw at Goodison Park.

Two goals from Kevin Campbell and another from Don Hutchison saw Everton lead three times in a pulsating first-half.

Leeds hit back in the opening period through Michael Bridges and a wonder 35-yard lob from Harry Kewell.

And then after the break Bridges levelled for a third time with a superb chip.

David O'Leary's men took the lead for the first time after 72 minutes when Jonathan Woodgate powered home a header from a corner.

But the last-gasp header from the Scottish defender saw the Toffees take a share of the spoils.

Sunderland had looked on course for their sixth league win on the bounce but a 89th minute effort from Trevor Sinclair saw West Ham grab a 1-1 draw at Upton Park.

Sunderland's Steve Bould was sent off for the visitors after only 19 minutes for an off-the-ball attack on Paulo Wanchope.

But England striker Kevin Phillips then scored for the 10-man Wearsiders with a neat header from a well-worked free-kick for his 13th goal of the season.

The Hammers missed a hatful of chances before they eventually levelled.

Sinclair picked the ball up near the halfway line, exchanged passes with Paolo Di Canio and then tucked the ball under the advancing Thomas Sorensen.

Watford slipped into the bottom three after losing 3-1 to Middlesbrough at Vicarage Road.

Kanu's hat-trick won the game for Arsenal in big derby over Chelsea.

Manchester City moved three points clear of the chasing pack in Division One after Richard Edghill scored his first goal in six years to put them on their way to a 2-0 success against big spenders Blackburn.

Edghill's 39th-minute goal was followed by a second from Jeff Whitley eight minutes from time to seal the win.

Ipswich remain City's closest challengers thanks to Richard Naylor's last-gasp 1-0 winner at Bescot Stadium against struggling Walsall.

David Johnson, in his first game since deciding to become 'Scottish,' got a rough ride from the Midlands supporters who repeatedly chanted 'England, England' whenever he touched the ball.

Charlton, who started the day in second place, slipped a notch when they failed to score at home for the first time this season as their match against mid-table West Brom ran out a 0-0 draw. It was a drab game and not one for the football purists.

Wolves, who last week spent £1million on Swindon striker George Ndah and went into the game having won their last three League matches, were in danger of defeat at the hands of strugglers Port Vale at Molineux.

Steve Sedgley gave Colin Lee's men the lead two minutes after the break but they were pegged back by goals from Michael Walsh and Tony Rougier in the space of four minutes and it took a Keith Curle penalty a minute from time to rescue a point.

Fulham missed a sackful of chances which would have elevated them to second place but they had to settle for a point in a 1-1 draw with Huddersfield at the McAlpine Stadium.

Huddersfield remain unbeaten under Steve Bruce at home this season but they were hanging on by the skin of their teeth as Fulham led through Kevin Gray's seventh minute own goal.

Despite having the ball in the net three times - all ruled out for offside - Fulham failed to capitalise on their chances and paid the price when Clyde Wijnhard whipped in the equaliser 15 minutes from time.

Birmingham were also held on their travels and settled for a draw at Grimsby thanks to Christopher Wreh, on-loan from Arsenal. He registered the Blues' first-half equaliser three minutes after Bradley Allen had put the Mariners in front.

Dave Bassett's men had to make do without goalkeeper Kevin Miller for the last 28 minutes of their clash with Dario Gradi's Crewe at Gresty Road after he was sent off for serious foul play.

But the Yorkshiremen managed to hang on to the lead, supplied by Craig Hignett on the stroke of half-time.

At the County Ground, Sheffield United came from 2-0 down to grab a point against bottom-of-the-table Swindon, who led with two goals from Chris Hay who netted on 11 and 21 minutes.

The Blades had their own two-goal hero in Martin Smith who became the Division's top scorer with 12 strikes in all competitions.

Smith found the target on 52 minutes to give Adrian Heath's men hope, and ensured a point with the equaliser on 82 minutes.

David Platt's loan-signing Ian Wright showed why he is such a scoring legend by netting after 16 minutes to give Forest a share of the points in a 1-1 home draw with seventh-placed Stockport.

Aston Villa (1) 1 Wimbledon (1) 1
Aston Villa: James, Southgate, Boateng (Merson 75), Taylor, Dublin, Thompson (Ghrayib 78), Barry, Hendrie, Carbone, Delaney, Calderwood.
Subs Not Used: Watson, Wright, Enckelman.
Booked: Barry.
Goals: Dublin 35.
Wimbledon: Sullivan, Cunningham, Kimble, Thatcher, Cort, Earle, Hartson (Andresen 62), Euell, Gayle (Leaburn 82), Andersen, Hreidarsson.
Subs Not Used: Roberts, Willmott, Davis.
Goals: Earle 26.
Att: 27,160

Bradford (2) 3 Leicester (1) 1
Bradford: Walsh, Halle, Wetherall, O'Brien, Sharpe, Windass, McCall, Redfearn, Saunders (Lawrence 84), Mills, Blake. Subs Not Used: Whalley, Clarke, Rankin, Dreyer.
Goals: Blake 12, Mills 40, Redfearn 66.
Leicester: Flowers, Guppy, Gilchrist, Sinclair, Elliott, Impey, Lennon, Izzet, Savage (Marshall 55), Cottee (Walsh 71), Heskey.
Subs Not Used: Arphexad, Oakes, Zagorakis.
Booked: Sinclair.
Goals: Impey 21.
Att: 17,655

Chelsea (1) 2 Arsenal (0) 3
Chelsea: De Goey, Ferrer, Desailly, Leboeuf, Babayaro, Petrescu, Wise, Deschamps, Le Saux (Poyet 53), Sutton, Flo (Zola 70).
Subs Not Used: Hogh, Morris, Cudicini.
Booked: Le Saux, Wise, Deschamps, Sutton.
Goals: Flo 38, Petrescu 52.
Arsenal: Seaman, Dixon, Keown, Adams, Silvinho, Parlour, Ljungberg (Henry 62), Petit (Vivas 64), Overmars (Upson 90), Kanu, Suker.
Subs Not Used: Manninger, Vernazza.
Booked: Dixon, Suker, Petit, Vivas.
Goals: Kanu 75, 83, 90.
Att: 34,958

Sheff Wed (0) 0 Coventry (0) 0
Sheff Wed: Srnicek, Atherton, Hinchcliffe (Briscoe 61), Jonk, Thome, Walker, Sonner, Booth (Sibon 80), Rudi, Alexandersson, De Bilde.
Subs Not Used: Pressman, Cresswell, Nolan.
Booked: Atherton.
Coventry: Hedman, Williams, Shaw, Keane, McAllister, Hadji, Telfer, Palmer, Froggatt, Chippo (Roussel 17), Hall.
Subs Not Used: Konjic, Strachan, Nuzzo, Eustace.
Booked: Williams.
Att: 23,296

Southampton (1) 1 Liverpool (0) 1
Southampton: Jones, Dodd, Lundekvam, Richards, Benali, Le Tissier (Ripley 53), Oakley, Hughes, Kachloul, Soltvedt (Beattie 86), Pahars.
Subs Not Used: Boa Morte, Colleter, Moss.
Booked: Dodd, Oakley.
Goals: Soltvedt 39.
Liverpool: Friedel, Henchoz, Song, Hyypia, Smicer (Heggem 73), Redknapp, Carragher, Murphy (Owen 58), Staunton, Meijer (Thompson 58), Camara.
Subs Not Used: Matteo, Nielsen.
Booked: Henchoz.
Goals: Camara 81.
Att: 15,241

Tottenham (2) 3 Man Utd (1) 1
Tottenham: Walker, Carr, Campbell, Young (Vega 76), Taricco, Fox (Piercy 87), Freund, Sherwood, Leonhardsen, Iversen, Ginola.
Subs Not Used: Baardsen, Edinburgh, Dominguez.
Booked: Fox, Sherwood, Freund.
Goals: Iversen 37, Scholes 40 og, Carr 71.
Man Utd: Bosnich, Neville, Stam, Silvestre, Irwin (Greening 82), Beckham (Solskjaer 68), Scholes, Keane, Giggs, Yorke, Cole.
Subs Not Used: Van Der Gouw, Berg, Higginbottom.
Booked: Beckham, Keane.
Goals: Giggs 23.
Att: 36,072

Everton (3) 4 Leeds (2) 4
Everton: Gerrard, Ball (Johnson 79), Gough, Watson, Unsworth, Weir, Barmby, Collins, Gemmill (Pembridge 27), Hutchison, Campbell.
Subs Not Used: Cadamarteri, Ward, Simonsen.
Goals: Campbell 4, 28, Hutchison 37, Weir 90.
Leeds: Martyn, Kelly, Harte, Radebe, Woodgate, Kewell, Bowyer, Batty, McPhail, Smith (Huckerby 67), Bridges.
Subs Not Used: Hopkin, Haaland, Robinson, Mills.
Goals: Bridges 15, Kewell 35, Bridges 67, Woodgate 72.
Att: 37,355

Watford (0) 1 Middlesbrough (2) 3
Watford: Chamberlain, Gibbs (Easton 75), Williams, Page, Robinson, Hyde, Palmer, Johnson, Miller, Wooter, Smith.
Subs Not Used: Ngonge, Day, Gudmundsson, Bonnot.
Booked: Williams.
Goals: Smith 53.
Middlesbrough: Schwarzer, Fleming, Vickers, Pallister, Cooper, O'Neill, Juninho (Stamp 77), Ince, Ziege, Deane, Ricard (Armstrong 45).
Subs Not Used: Beresford, Campbell, Gavin.
Booked: Ziege.
Goals: Williams 2 og, Juninho 18, Ince 83.
Att: 16,081

West Ham (0) 1 Sunderland (1) 1
West Ham: Hislop, Stimac (Ruddock 56), Ferdinand, Margas, Sinclair, Lomas (Moncur 73), Lampard, Cole, Keller, Wanchope (Kitson 63), Di Canio.
Subs Not Used: Foe, Forrest.
Booked: Ferdinand, Lomas, Sinclair, Ruddock.
Goals: Sinclair 89.
Sunderland: Sorensen, Makin, Bould, Butler, Gray (Williams 22), Summerbee, Rae (Roy 68), McCann, Schwarz, Phillips,Quinn (Dichio 73).
Subs Not Used: Marriott, Reddy.
Sent Off: Bould (19).
Booked: McCann, Makin.
Goals: Phillips 24.
Att: 26,022

COMPILED BY INSIDE SOCCER

Scottish Premier League Round Up

CELTIC IN LAST GAP WIN AT SAINTS

Celtic's Alan Stubbs

Morten Wieghorst's highly disputed injury-time header left St Johnstone furious losers at McDiarmid Park as Celtic snatched a 2-1 triumph.

The Dane's controversial far post effort which hit the woodwork was adjudged to have crossed the line in a dramatic finale which earned the visitors an unlikely win.

It looked a point at best for them after Mark Burchill delivered a vital moment of evidence in his bid to prove himself a worthy long-term replacement for Henrik Larsson.

Trailing to Nathan Lowndes' 29th minute opener, which stemmed from a rare Paul Lambert error, Celtic were able to reach parity after Burchill's 48th minute individual effort.

The travelling Celtic support sang the stricken Swede's name before kick-off and unfurled a banner which read simply: 'God Bless Henrik'.

Despite the eventual victory it was uneven display from the visitors, with five changes from the team which lost narrowly in France, demonstrating how much Larsson's spark will be missed.

Saints defeated Celtic twice at this venue last term and were also one of only two sides, Rangers being the other, to win at Parkhead in the Scottish Premier League.

However Celtic's fortunate recovery job means they close the gap on leaders Rangers to one point with the opportunity to move top should they defeat Motherwell in midweek.

Third-placed Dundee United missed the chance to close the gap on Rangers and Celtic as they slumped to a 2-0 home defeat against Motherwell.

Former Scottish international John Spencer put Motherwell in front on the stroke of half-time and Shaun Teale secured the points with a retaken penalty in the 69th minute.

Motherwell, who had suffered the shock of conceding six goals at home against Aberdeen in a remarkable 6-5 defeat in midweek, climbed from ninth to seventh with the victory.

Russell Latapy inspired Hibernian to their first win in 11 matches by destroying the Dundee defence at Easter Road in a 5-2 home romp.

The Trinidad international scored two (40 and 79) and could have had another as Hibs ran riot.

Kenny Miller (31), Franck Sauzee (63) and Dirk Lehmann (90) also scored for the home side after Roberto Matute had put Dundee in front in the sixth minute.

Willie Falconer pulled it back to 3-2 with 15 minutes remaining but the afternoon ended on a black note for Dundee, who had Lee Wilkie sent off in the last minute for a second bookable offence.

Aberdeen had to settle for a point despite twice taking the lead in their home clash with Kilmarnock.Paul Bernard gave Aberdeen an early lead but Killie deservedly drew level when Christophe Cocart virtually beat the whole of Aberdeen's defence before neatly firing home with his left foot in the 50th minute.

Aberdeen (1) 2 Kilmarnock (0) 2
Aberdeen: Leighton, Anderson, Solberg, Lilley, McAllister, Kiriakov (Gillies 87), Bernard, Mayer (Perry 77), Dow, Winters, Jess.
Subs Not Used: Esson, Buchan, Hamilton.
Booked: Winters, Solberg.
Goals: Bernard 2, 57.
Kilmarnock: Watt, MacPherson, Baker, Dindeleux, Lauchlan, Cocart, Holt, Durrant, Mitchell, Jeffrey, Vareille.
Subs Not Used: Meldrum, Reilly, Mahood, Hessey, McCutcheon.
Booked: Baker.
Goals: Cocart 50, Mitchell 86.
Att: 10,352

Dundee Utd (0) 0 Motherwell (1) 2
Dundee Utd: Combe, De Vos, Pascual (Bove 82), Partridge, Davidson (Venetis 71), Hannah, Telesnikov, Easton (Ferraz 66), McCulloch, Dodds, Thompson.
Subs Not Used: Gallacher, Malpas.
Booked: Partridge, De Vos.
Motherwell: Goram, Doesburg, Kemble, Teale, McMillan, Twaddle (Townsley 59), Brannan, Valakari, Nevin (Harvey 67), Spencer (Goodman 55), McCulloch.
Subs Not Used: Brown, Craigen.
Booked: Valakari, Teale.
Goals: Spencer 45, Teale 69 pen.
Att: 6,213

Hibernian (2) 5 Dundee (1) 2
Hibernian: Gottskalksson, Jack, Smith, Dempsie, Dennis, Sauzee (Lehmann 75), Brebner, Latapy, McGinlay, Paatelainen, Miller (Hartley 65).
Subs Not Used: Campbell, Collins, Huggon.
Booked: Brebner.
Goals: Miller 31, Latapy 40, Sauzee 63, Latapy 79, Lehmann 90.
Dundee: Douglas, Miller (Slater 33), Sharp, Tweed, Robertson, Matute (Annand 45), Van Eijs (Elliott 70), Boyack, Falconer, Wilkie, Rae.
Subs Not Used: Langfield, McSkimming.
Sent Off: Wilkie (90).
Booked: Wilkie, Annand.
Goals: Matute 6, Falconer 73.
Att: 10,160

St Johnstone (1) 1 Celtic (0) 2
St Johnstone: Main, McQuillan, Dasovic, O'Boyle, Kane, Lowndes (Simao 66), Bollan, Griffin, O'Halloran, McCluskey,McAnespie.
Subs Not Used: Robertson, O'Neil, McBride, Thomas.
Booked: Dasovic, McCluskey.
Goals: Lowndes 29.
Celtic: Gould, Riseth, Tebily (Mjallby 90), Wieghorst, Stubbs, Lambert, Petta, Blinker, Petrov, Burchill, Viduka.
Subs Not Used: Kharine, Burley, Healy, Moravcik.
Booked: Blinker.
Goals: Burchill 48, Wieghorst 90.
Att: 10,200

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Leeds	12	8	2	2	25	16	26	9
Arsenal	12	8	1	3	20	12	25	8
Sunderland	12	7	3	2	21	10	24	11
Man Utd	12	7	3	2	28	19	24	9
Tottenham	11	6	2	3	20	15	20	5
Leicester	12	6	2	4	20	17	20	3
Chelsea	10	6	1	3	17	7	19	10
Everton	12	5	3	4	21	18	18	3
Aston Villa	12	5	3	4	13	12	18	1
Middlesbrough	12	6	0	6	16	16	18	0
West Ham	10	5	2	3	12	9	17	3
Liverpool	11	4	3	4	12	11	15	1
Coventry	12	3	4	5	16	15	13	1
Southampton	11	3	3	5	18	22	12	-4
Wimbledon	12	2	6	4	18	26	12	-8
Bradford	11	3	2	6	9	17	11	-8
Derby	11	2	3	6	10	19	9	-9
Watford	12	3	0	9	8	18	9	-10
Newcastle	11	2	1	8	21	27	7	-6
Sheff Wed	12	1	2	9	8	27	5	-19

ENGLISH DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Man City	13	8	2	3	18	7	26	11
Ipswich	12	7	2	3	26	16	23	10
Charlton	11	7	2	2	20	11	23	9
Fulham	12	6	5	1	15	7	23	8
Birmingham	14	6	4	4	22	15	22	7
Barnsley	13	7	1	5	26	23	22	3
Stockport	13	6	4	3	16	16	22	0
Huddersfield	13	5	4	4	23	17	19	6
QPR	12	5	4	3	16	12	19	4
Wolverhampton	13	4	6	3	13	14	18	-1
Nottm Forest	13	4	5	4	19	15	17	4
Bolton	13	4	4	5	19	17	16	2
Portsmouth	12	4	4	4	16	19	16	-3
Grimsby	13	4	4	5	14	18	16	-4
Sheff Utd	13	4	4	5	18	23	16	-5
Blackburn	12	3	5	4	14	13	14	1
West Brom	12	2	8	2	10	10	14	0
Norwich	13	4	4	5	12	14	14	-2
Crystal Palace	13	3	5	5	19	23	14	-4
Tranmere	14	3	4	7	16	24	13	-8
Port Vale	14	3	3	8	16	22	12	-6
Crewe	12	3	3	6	14	21	12	-7
Walsall	14	3	3	8	11	24	12	-13
Swindon	14	2	4	8	10	22	10	-12

ENGLISH DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Notts County	13	9	2	2	22	11	29	11
Stoke	14	8	3	3	23	14	27	9
Bristol Rovers	14	8	3	3	17	10	27	7
Wigan	12	7	5	0	23	9	26	14
Burnley	14	7	5	2	17	9	26	8
Preston	14	7	5	2	19	15	26	4
Luton	14	7	3	4	20	15	24	5
Gillingham	14	6	4	4	23	19	22	4
Brentford	12	5	5	2	20	13	20	7
Bury	14	5	5	4	25	20	20	5
Wycombe	14	5	5	4	18	17	20	1
Bournemouth	13	5	4	4	18	15	19	3
Millwall	12	4	5	3	15	16	17	-1
Scunthorpe	14	4	4	6	11	17	16	-6
Wrexham	14	4	4	6	17	24	16	-7
Bristol City	13	3	5	5	14	16	14	-2
Reading	13	4	2	7	19	25	14	-6
Cardiff	14	2	6	6	15	21	12	-6
Chesterfield	13	2	5	6	10	13	11	-3
Oldham	13	3	2	8	13	18	11	-5
Oxford Utd	14	3	2	9	13	20	11	-7
Cambridge Utd	14	2	4	8	21	26	10	-5
Blackpool	14	2	4	8	14	27	10	-13
Colchester	12	2	2	8	12	29	8	-17

ENGLISH DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Barnet	14	8	4	2	21	13	28	8
Rotherham	14	8	2	4	24	10	26	14
Torquay	14	8	2	4	19	15	26	4
Peterborough	14	8	2	4	18	14	26	4
Darlington	14	7	4	3	15	9	25	6
Halifax	14	7	2	5	18	14	23	4
Brighton	14	6	4	4	21	12	22	9
Exeter	14	6	4	4	18	14	22	4
Lincoln City	14	6	4	4	20	17	22	3
Rochdale	14	6	3	5	11	6	21	5
Southend	14	6	3	5	20	19	21	1
Swansea	13	6	2	5	12	10	20	2
Plymouth	14	5	5	4	18	17	20	1
Northampton	14	6	2	6	11	10	20	1
Macclesfield	14	6	2	6	17	18	20	-1
Hartlepool	14	6	1	7	18	16	19	2
York	14	4	5	5	14	18	17	-4
Mansfield	14	4	4	6	15	18	16	-3
Carlisle	14	3	5	6	15	24	14	-9
Hull	14	3	4	7	10	16	13	-6
Cheltenham	13	4	1	8	7	13	13	-6
Shrewsbury	14	3	3	8	12	23	12	-11
Leyton Orient	14	2	3	9	12	24	9	-12
Chester	14	2	3	9	15	31	9	-16

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Rangers	9	8	1	0	25	7	25	18
Celtic	9	8	0	1	27	4	24	23
Dundee Utd	10	5	2	3	14	14	17	0
Hearts	8	4	2	2	15	11	14	4
St Johnstone	10	3	3	4	13	16	12	-3
Hibernian	11	2	5	4	18	22	11	-4
Motherwell	9	2	4	3	16	19	10	-3
Kilmarnock	10	2	3	5	9	11	9	-2
Dundee	11	3	0	8	16	24	9	-8
Aberdeen	11	1	2	8	11	36	5	-25

SCOTTISH DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
St Mirren	11	7	3	1	30	14	24	16
Dunfermline	11	5	6	0	20	10	21	10
Livingston	11	5	4	2	20	13	19	7
Raith	11	5	3	3	22	19	18	3
Falkirk	11	5	2	4	18	19	17	-1
Ayr	11	4	1	6	14	19	13	-5
Airdrie	11	3	4	4	9	17	13	-8
Greenock Morton	11	3	3	5	17	19	12	-2
Inverness CT	11	2	4	5	12	18	10	-6
Clydebank	11	0	2	9	8	22	2	-14

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE - ROUND FIVE

ADELAIDE FORCE v CARLTON

1		1	Dean Anastasiadis
2		2	Dave McPherson
3	Ivan Zelic	3	Craig Deans
4	Milan Ivanovic	4	Simon Colosimo
5	Alex Tobin	5	Sean Douglas
6	Carlo Talladira	6	Andrew Marth
7	Damian Mori	7	Struart Slater
8	Carl Veart	8	Mark Atkinson
9	Nick Sabljak	9	Alex Moriera
10	Aurelio Vidmar	10	Lubo Lapsansky
11	Igor Rodgriues	11	Archie Thompson
12	Nathan Day	12	Mike Conroy
13	John Fusco	13	Steve Martin
14	Michael Cartwright	14	John Markovski
15	Louis Brain	15	Con Anthopoulos
16	Bradley Hassell	16	David Terminello
17	Angelo Costanzo	17	Joe Tricarico
18		18	David Della Rocca
19		19	Serdar Pir
20	Vilson Knezevic	20	Adrian Cagalj
21	Dong Ki Kim	21	Andrew Packer
22		22	Angelo Motsiopoulos
		23	Colin Azzopardi
		24	Joshua Kennedy

Venue: **Hindmarsh Stadium - Friday 29 October, 8.00PM**
Head to Head: Played 4 Force wins: 1 Carlton wins: 2 Draws 1
Last Week: Force 0-0 away draw with Glory
Carlton 2-1 home win over Knights

CANBERRA COSMOS v PERTH GLORY

1		1	Danny Milosevic
2		2	Robert Trajkovski
3	Toplica Popovich	3	Jamie Harnwell
4	Danny Burt	4	
5	Nicholas Purdue	5	Vinko Buljubasic
6	Jason Polak	6	Gareth Naven
7	David Winnie	7	Scott Miller
8	Daniel Watkins	8	Troy Halpin
9	Alex Castro	9	Alistair Edwards
10	Michael Musitano	10	Bobby Despotoski
11	David Arranz	11	Kasey Wehrman
12	Brian Hamilton	12	Peter Buljan
13		13	Jamos Afkos
14	Harry James	14	Dion Valle
15	Glen Kolpak	15	Edgar Junior
16	Ilija Prenzoski	16	Con Boutsianis
17		17	Vas Kalogeracos
18	Nikola Mrdja	18	Hamilton Thorp
19	Geoff Howarth	19	John Carbone
20	Grant Barlow	20	Tony Franken
21	Scott Conlon	21	Ivan Ergic
22	Elliot Zwangobani		
25	Ivo De Jesus		
26	Gabriel Gonzalez		
30	Angelo Konstantinou		

Venue: **Bruce Stadium - Friday 29 October, 7.30PM**
Head to Head: Played 6 Cosmos wins: 1 Glory wins: 4 Draws 1
Last Week: Cosmos 2-3 away win over Power
Glory 0-0 home draw with Force

FOOTBALL KINGZ v WOLLONGONG WOLVES

1	Michael Utting	1	Leslie Pogliacomi
2	Che Bunce	2	George Souris
3	Riki Van Steeden	3	Alvin Ceccoli
4	Fabio Macolino	4	Robert Stanton
5	Jonathon Perry	5	David Cervinksi
6	Marcus Stergiopoulos	6	Matthew Horsley
7	Wynton Rufer	7	Paul Reid
8	Chris Jackson	8	Anthony Surjan
9	Fred de Jong	9	Sasho Dimoski
10	Dino Mennillo	10	Stuart Young
11	Robbie Middleby	11	Scott Chipperfield
12	Harry Ngata	12	Neil Harlock
13	Levent Osman	13	Noel Spencer
14	Batrum Suri	14	Saso Petrovski
15	Ivan Vicelich	15	David Huxley
16		16	Peter Lahamas
17	Maciel Edmilson	17	Esala Masi
18	Stuart Riddle	18	Chad Bishop
21	David Moya	19	Paul Dimech
22	Aaron Silva	20	Daniel Berltrame
		21	Christian Zelvis
		22	
		23	
		24	
		25	

Venue: **North Harbour Stadium- Friday 29 October, TBA**
Head to Head: Played 0 Kingz 0 Wolves wins: 1 Draws 0
Last Week: Kingz 1-1 away draw with Breakers
Wolves 1-1 away draw with Olympic

BRISBANE STRIKERS v PARRAMATTA POWER

1	Clint Bolton	1	Andrew Crews
2	Glenn Gwynne	2	David Barrett
3	Shane Stefanutto	3	Michael Santalab
4	Andrew Davidson	4	Steve Eagleton
5	Matthew Belll	5	Richard Plesa
6	Brad Ditton	6	Joe Vrkic
7	Shane Smeltz	7	Jacob Burns
8	David Pilic	8	Walter Ardone
9	Paul Foster	9	Mile Sterjovski
10	Wayne Srhoj	10	Joel Griffiths
11	Greg Di Losa	11	Steve Berry
12		12	Stephen Laybutt
13	Stuart McClaren	13	Milan Blagojevic
14	Jade North	14	John Angelucci
15	Leo Langone	15	Danny Townsend
16	Peter Grierson	16	
17	Jeromy Harris	17	Danny Kukucka
18	Nick Meredith	18	Lachlan Campbell
19	Wade Baldwin	19	Matt Thompson
20	Daniel Duke	20	Barney Smith
		21	Ahmid Elrich
		22	John Gibson
		28	Peter Bennett
		30	Mike Gibson

Venue: **Suncorp Metway Stadium - Saturday 30 October, 7.00PM**
Head to Head: Played 0 Strikers wins: 0 Power wins: 0 Draws 0
Last Week: Strikers 2-2 home draw with Spirit
Power 2-3 home loss to Cosmos

LIVE TELECAST ON OPTUS C7 CHANNEL 12 7.30 PM SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER, 1999

GIPPSLAND FALCONS v NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

1	Bojo Jevedjevic	1	Bob Catlin
2	Dean Fak	2	Shane Pryce
3	Manny Gotis	3	Andrew Roberts
4	Mehmed Durakovic	4	Adam Sanderson
5	Jeff Hopkins	5	Todd McManus
6	Brian MacNichol	6	Glenn Sprod
7	Andy Vargas	7	Travis Dodd
8	Clayton Bell	8	Mark Wilson
9	Robbie Puca	9	Chris Tancheski
10	Sandy Robertson	10	John Buonavoglia
11	John Hutchinson	11	Luke Tomich
12	Peter Kakos	12	Robert Angievski
13	Adrian Savage	13	Brad Wieczorek
14	Doug Marcina	14	Greg Owens
15	Jonathon Buhugiar	15	Joshua Ferguson
16	Juan Nilo	16	Vasko Trpcevski
17	Will Hastie	17	Paul Wheeler
18	Michael Katz	18	Andrew Harper
19		19	Chad Mansley
		20	Bradley Swancott
		21	Peter Juchniewicz
		22	Glen Moore

Venue: **Mobil Park-Saturday 30 October, 7.00PM**
Head to Head: Played 13 Falcons wins: 6 Breakers wins: 3 Draws 4
Last Week: Falcons 3-0 away loss to South Melbourne
Breakers 1-1 home draw with Kingz

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS v SYDNEY UNITED

1		1	John Crawley
2	Joey Rayher	2	Ray Younis
3	Ivan Jolic	3	Mark Racker
4	Ante Kovacevic	4	Velimir Kupresak
5	Jason Vukadin	5	Eddie Bosnar
6	John Didulica	6	Vince Savocca
7	Mark Silic	7	Mirko Jurilj
8	Dragi Nastevski	8	Nahuel Arrarte
9	Ivan Kelic	9	Mario Jermen
10	Paul Urlovic	10	Ante Moric
11	Mijo Trupkovic	11	Tom Pondeljak
12	Murtala Toyin Abbas	12	Tom Maric
13	Lance Plunkett	13	Matthew Zec
14	Paul Magdic	14	Kain Rastall
15	Ransford Banini	15	Aytec Genc
16	Alex Kriatzoglou	16	Joe Moric
17	Brandon Vassalo	17	NIck Bosevski
18	Roddy Vargas	18	Steve Bozinovski
19		19	Greg Saric
20	Martin John	20	Steve Tolios
21	Zeljko Susa	25	Ante Deak
22	Steven Tillinger		
23	Michael Reda		

Venue: **Knights Park-Sunday 31 October, 3.00PM**
Head to Head: Played 27 Knights wins: 11 Sydney United wins: 8 Draws 8
Last Week: Knights 2-1 away loss to Carlton
Sydney United 1-2 home loss to Marconi

LIVE TELECAST FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER 7.30 PM

OPTUS C7 CHANNEL 12

NORTHERN SPIRIT v SYDNEY OLYMPIC

1	John Perosh
2	Robert Enes
3	Matthew Langdon
4	Matthew Bingley
5	Mark Rudan
6	Luke Casserley
7	Robbie Slater
8	Tony Perinich
9	David Seal
10	Clayton Zane
11	Troy Cranney
12	Simon Catanzaro
13	Philip Moss
14	Shane Lyons
15	Anthony Faria
16	
17	Paul Bilokapic (above)
18	Paul Wearne
19	Graham Arnold
20	Jess Van Stratten
21	Michael Cunico
22	Paul Henderson
23	Adam Snyder
24	Elvis Olic
25	Ryan Griffiths
26	Jack Sobczyk
27	Adam Griffiths
28	Abbas Saad
30	Sean Cranney

1	Jim Kourtis
2	Scott Thomas
3	Chris Zoricich
4	Peter Tsekenis
5	Scott Baillie
6	Ante Juric
7	Zlatko Arambasic
8	Marcus Phillips
9	Pablo Cardozo
10	Brett Emerton
11	Chris Kalantzis
12	Sebastian Sinozic
13	
14	Gabriel Mendez
15	Lindsay Wilson
16	Adrian Cervinski
17	Paul Kohler
18	John Kyriazopoulos
19	Nick Carle
20	George Bouhoutsos
21	Lee Miot
22	Pete Zorbas

Venue: **North Sydney Oval**
Friday 29 October, 7.30PM

Head-to-Head:	**Played two**
Spirit wins:	**1**
Olympic wins:	**1**
Draws:	**0**

Last Week:
Spirit: 2-2 away draw with Brisbane
Olympic: 1-1 home draw with Wollongong

REPLAYED SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER 7.30 PM

OPTUS C7 CHANNEL 12

MARCONI v SOUTH MELBOURNE

1	
2	Chad Gibson
3	Mark Babic
4	
5	Dominic Longo
6	Pan-Keum Kim
7	Christian Care
8	Darren McDonald
9	Zeljko Babic
10	Brad Maloney
11	Mike Smith
12	
13	Danny Invincible
14	Buddy Farah
15	Pierluigi di Gia
16	
17	Francis Awaritefe
18	Harry Karl
19	Brendan Ranaud
20	David Aceski
21	Paolo Marchesini
22	Kris Trajanovski
23	Vlado Zoric

1	Milan Udvaracz
2	Steve Iosifidis
3	Fausto de Amicis
4	Nick Orlic
5	Con Blatsis
6	David Clarkson
7	Steve Panopoulos
8	Vaughan Coveny
9	Paul Trimboli
10	Michael Curcija
11	John Anastasiadis
12	Richie Alagich
13	Adrian Cuzzupe
14	Anthony Magnacca
15	Goran Lozanovski
16	George Goutzoulis
17	Jim Tsekinis
18	Robert Liparoti
19	Tasos Psonis
20	Chris Jones
21	
22	Mustafa Mustafa

Venue: **Marconi Stadium**
Sunday 31 October, 6.00PM

Head to Head:	**Played forty-four**
Marconi wins:	**19**
South Melbourne wins:	**16**
Draws	**9**

Last Week:
Marconi: 1-2 away win against Sydney United
South Melbourne: 3-0 home win over Gippsland

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